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MYTHS OF HELLAS

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HERA

From an Ancient Statue now in the Vatican Museum at Rome

MYTHS OF HELLAS

OR

GREEK TALES

TOLD IN GERMAN BY

PROFESSOR C. WITT

HEAD MASTER OF THE ALTSTADT GYMNASIUM AT KÖNIGSBERG

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

(with the Author's sanction)

BY

FRANCES YOUNGHUSBAND

WITH A PREFACE

BY

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SECOND EDITION

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00083297

TO ALL ENGLISH CHILDREN

BUT ESPECIALLY TO C. I. W. AND TO E. R. Y. AND O. Y.

WHOSE PLEASURE IN THESE STORIES

HAS MADE ME WISH

TO BRING THEM WITHIN THE REACH OF OTHER CHILDREN

I DEDICATE THIS TRANSLATION

F. M Y.

PREFACE.

THE FOLLOWING COLLECTION OF LEGENDS about the Greek gods and heroes, to which I have been asked to write a few words of introduction, is a translation of a little book by Professor C. Witt which has been received in Germany with great favour by the public and the press. This popularity has been due, not merely to the intrinsic beauty of the stories, but to the skill shown in the selection, and in the simplicity of the style. The last quality it has been the aim of the translator to retain in the English version; and the success of the book in Germany suggests a hope that the translation may become a favourite in this country.

That there still exists a demand for some such book, notwithstanding the deserved popularity of Kingsley's 'Heroes,' Cox's Mythological Tales, and Church's Stories from Greek and Latin Writers, seems to be shown by the large number of encouraging letters received by the translator from persons engaged or interested in education.

That Greek stories, simply told, will be acceptable to children, common sense would tell us, even apart from experience. Children impartially welcome all tales of incident and wonder, if they can understand the language in which they are written, and if their pleasure is not dashed by the medicinal flavour of a moral. And even a moral will not deter them if it be not too explicit or obtrusive.

Again, from the teacher's point of view as well as the child's, there seems to be every reason in favour of presenting to them at an early age the stories of Greek mythology. There is first the obvious fact that such reading trains and cultivates the imaginative faculties, and that it is good to vary the 'Arabian Nights' and the German and Norse fairy-tales with such totally different material as the Greek stories. There are also other reasons arising from the altered position of Greek in education.

Without entering on any controverted question, it is clear that even in classical schools the teaching of Greek will have in the future to occupy fewer hours, and probably to begin at a later age, than hitherto. The much greater number of subjects now taught, and necessarily and rightly taught, makes this inevitable. And if the same good, or anything like the same good, is to be got out of the fewer hours, there must be considerable modification of method. And one obvious

modification is, that much which before was taught slowly and painfully by means of the Greek authors, should be learnt quickly and pleasurably by means of an English rendering. To take a very humble example: The present writer would have a much less weary memory of his early struggles with the 'Alcestis' of Euripides at the age of twelve, if he had been familiar from the age of six with such a version of the story as is presented in this volume. In short, to bring to the study of a language—always a difficult and tedious business to a beginner—some knowledge of the matter with which the literature deals, and some interest in the people and their life, must tend to lighten and shorten the process of learning. And to this end the following little book is offered as a small contribution.

The aim and hope of the translator may be thus summed up in two or three words. All children will get pleasure out of these stories, and that is much. Many children will perhaps get the elements of culture, and that is more. And some may get at once pleasure, culture, and a little real preparation for severer studies; and so receive a benefit, though doubtless of a humbler kind, yet something like that which Pope's 'Homer' has given to so many generations of schoolboys.

A. S.

OXFORD: *November*, 1882.

NOTE ON THE SOURCES OF THE STORIES.

The stories have been taken by the Author from many sources, but chiefly from a Greek writer, Apollodorus, who lived in the second century B.C., and collected the old mythological tales. A good deal has also been taken from the poems of Hesiod and Homer, and from the tragedies of Sophocles; but in these cases it has been necessary to exercise some care in the selection of what would be suitable for a book intended to be placed in the hands of children. Several of the details have been supplied by the ancient works of art which have come down to us.

NOTE ON THE NAMES OF THE GODS.

As it is probable that many readers will be more familiar with the Latin names of the gods, whilst the stories in this book, being derived from Greek sources, give naturally the Greek names, the following list will perhaps be useful, which shows the corresponding names of each god in the two languages:—

Greek.	*Latin.*
Aphrodītē.	Venus.
Apollon.	Apollo.
Artemis.	Diana.
Athēnē.	Minerva.
Kronos.	Saturnus.
Dēmētēr.	Ceres.
Dionusos or Bacchos.	Bacchus.
Hephaistos.	Vulcanus.
Hēra.	Iuno.
Hermēs.	Mercurius.
Persephonē.	Proserpina.
Plouton.	Pluto.
Poseidon.	Neptunus.
Zeūs.	Iuppiter.

Also the hero and demi-god Herakles is called Hercules by the Romans.

The young reader will naturally ask why, if the stories are the same, the names are in most cases so different. And the answer is briefly this: Each nation had originally its own gods, with different names and quite different ideas attaching to them. But the Greeks were a far more gifted and imaginative people than the Romans, and, when communication was established between the countries, became in many ways their teachers. Many Romans learned Greek, and the Greek stories became current. But as the Romans naturally adhered to the old names of their own gods, there arose in this way an identification. The old Latin ideas about their gods gave way to, or were incorporated with, the much richer and more poetical Greek fancies and traditions; and thus the Greek mythology was almost bodily adopted by the Roman writers.

For example, the god Saturnus was originally a Latin rustic god, presiding (as the name shows) over the important work of *sowing* corn. But when the identification took place, all the stories about Kronos were gradually attached to him, and thus we find him in the Roman poets the father of Iuppiter, and the old, dispossessed king of the gods.

In a few cases (as Apollo, Pluto, Bacchus), the name was adopted as well as the story, the termination being Latinised. Sometimes it was corrupted, as Proserpina from Persephone; and sometimes a chance resemblance (as that between the Latin Hercules, originally Herculus, and the Greek Herakles) determined the identification.

Accordingly when we say, as is often said, that the Greek Artemis (for example) is 'called Diana in Latin,' we are using language which, without the above explanation, is liable to mislead the beginner.

A. S.

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MYTHS OF HELLAS.

I.

THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS.

LONG AGO, in the beginning of time, there was nothing but a huge dark mass called Chaos. In this Chaos were hidden all things that now exist, the earth and the sky, light and darkness, fire and water, and everything else, but they were not yet severed one from the other, and were so mingled and confused that nothing had a separate form of its own. After the Chaos had lasted for a long time it parted asunder, and the earth was divided from the heaven. The sun and the moon and the stars mounted up above into the sky, but the water and the stones and the trees liked better to remain below with the earth.

There was a god in the sky called Uranus, and on earth there was a goddess called Gaea. They became husband and wife, and had several children, of whom six were ugly and twelve were beautiful. The ugly ones had, each of them, either a hundred arms, or else only one eye. Those who had a hundred arms had also fifty heads, and they were as big as mountains, and very

frightful. The others had only one eye apiece, and it was placed in the middle of their foreheads and was as large as a cart wheel. But the beautiful brothers and sisters were formed like men, only they were much larger and grander. Six of them were gods, and were called Titans; there were also six goddesses, who were called Titanides.

The gods lived on the summit of a very high mountain called Mount Olympus, which almost reached the sky, and Uranus was king over them all. He could not bear the sight of his hundred-armed and one-eyed children because they were so hideous, so he thrust them into a dark pit below the earth, called Tartarus, and would not let them come out of it again. But the mother Gaea loved even her ugly children, and was angry with Uranus for banishing them into darkness and misery. And she said to her son Cronus, who was the youngest of the beautiful gods, that if he would promise to fetch up his hundred-armed and one-eyed brothers out of Tartarus, she would help him to dethrone Uranus and himself become king of the gods. Cronus promised that he would do this, and Gaea created the bright cutting steel, and made with it a sharp sickle which she gave to her son, and told him to stab Uranus with it when he was asleep. Cronus did as she desired him, and thus Uranus lost his kingly power.

Cronus now ruled over the world in his father's stead, and the other gods had to obey him. He took one of the Titanides called Rhea to be his wife, and made her the queen. He also fetched up his ugly brothers from Tartarus, but he soon became afraid of them and drove them back into the dark pit. The

mother Gaea now saw how little she had gained by her treachery to her husband, and she told Cronus that he should lose his kingly power through one of his children just as Uranus had done. This frightened him so much that whenever Rhea had a child, he took it and swallowed it. He swallowed five of them in this way, and poor Rhea was very sad because she had no children left. Then Gaea told her, next time she had a child, to take a stone and wrap it in swaddling clothes and give it to Cronus to swallow as if it were the baby, but keep the real child in some safe place till it was grown up. Rhea did so, and Cronus swallowed the stone she gave him, thinking it was the little boy that had just been born, but Rhea hid the child in a cave in the island of Crete where a beautiful goat named Amalthea nourished him with her milk. And there were armed men there, who, whenever the baby cried, danced about and clashed their shields and spears together as if they were treading a war-dance for their own amusement, but it was really to prevent Cronus from hearing the crying. The boy was named Zeus, and in a year he was quite grown up, and was the most beautiful and most powerful of all the gods. When Cronus was asleep, Rhea used to go to the cave and talk to him.

At last the time came when Zeus was to wage war against his father, and then Gaea gave her daughter Rhea a bowl containing a sweet medicine for Cronus to drink. Rhea went to her husband and said, 'The mother Gaea is no longer angry with you, and she has sent you this sweet drink.' Cronus took the bowl and drank it up; it tasted very nice, but after he had

swallowed it he began to feel very uncomfortable, and presently he was sick. Then out came the stone and the children that he had swallowed, the youngest first, and the eldest last; there were two gods and three goddesses, and they were all quite grown up. The names of the gods were Poseidon and Pluto, and the names of the goddesses were Hera, Demeter, and Hestia.

Then the young gods made war against the old ones, and they sent for the hundred-armed and one-eyed monsters out of Tartarus, that they might help them. The One-eyed were very skilful at smith's work, and they were so grateful to Zeus for setting them free that they forged for him valuable weapons, thunder and lightning. The old gods took their stand on Mount Othrys, and the young ones on Mount Olympus, and between them was a wide far-stretching valley where they fought. When there was a battle the whole earth resounded at the tread of the gods. The Hundred-armed always threw a hundred pieces of rock at once, and Zeus hurled thunderbolt after thunderbolt, till the woods were in flames and the rivers boiled. The war lasted for ten years, but at last the young gods triumphed. They thrust their enemies into Tartarus, and set the Hundred-armed and the One-eyed to keep guard over them.

Zeus was now the king of the gods, and he married his sister Hera and made her the queen. He also gave an empire to each of his brothers: all the sea was made subject to Poseidon, and Pluto became king of the Lower World, where the dead are. These gods had children, who were also gods, and had each their part in the government of the universe. The good goat

Amalthea was already dead, but Zeus honoured her by making one of her horns a wonder, which became famous all over the world. Whoever had it might wish for anything he liked to eat or drink, and immediately it was there; and for this reason it was called the Horn of Plenty, because it produced in abundance everything that could be desired in the way of food.

The mother Gaea had planned the overthrow of Cronus because he had driven back his hundred-armed and one-eyed brothers into Tartarus. But she found herself worse off than ever, for the only result of her revenge was that now her beautiful children were imprisoned instead of the ugly ones. This made her very angry with the young gods, and she could not bear to see them powerful and happy. So she brought into the world some hideous monsters to make war against the young gods. They were called Giants, and had enormous strength and courage. They tore up masses of rock and dashed them up into the air till the vault of heaven rang again, but the gods only laughed at it, for the stones were powerless to hurt them by the time they had reached so great a height, and there was no mountain high enough for the Giants to climb from it to the top of Mount Olympus.

The Giants went on in this way for a long time, but they found that, do what they would, they could not inflict any injury upon the gods, and only got laughed at for their pains, so they resolved to try another plan. They made up their minds to build a ladder by which they might climb up to the abode of the gods, and they set to work to uproot a mountain called Ossa, and roll it on to the top of another mountain called

Pelion. But whilst they were doing this, Zeus hurled a mighty thunderbolt against Ossa and made it fall down again, and the gods rushed down to the earth to fight the Giants, shouting their war-cry. The fight lasted for a whole day, for the Giants were very strong; but at last the gods gained the victory, and they crushed each of the Giants beneath a huge mountain, which did not kill him, but prevented his ever getting up again. One of them tried to escape over the Mediterranean Sea, but the goddess Athene, who was the daughter of Zeus, tore off a great three-cornered piece of land and threw it after him. It hit him just as he was in the middle of the sea, and he fell down and was buried beneath it. After some time the land became covered with forests and cities, and it is now called the Island of Sicily. Every now and then the Giants turn on one side beneath their mountains, and then people say, 'It is an earthquake'; and sometimes they become quite furious with impatience, and then their fiery breath bursts through the mountains and puffs out molten iron and stones.

After the Giants were conquered, Gaea created a truly terrific being, far worse than they had been. She brought him out of a great crack that she made in the earth, and she called her son Typhöeus and was quite pleased to see how hideous he was, for she thought that such a monstrous creature would surely be able to conquer the young gods. He could see over the tops of the highest mountains, and when he stretched out his hands they reached right round the world. He had a hundred heads, each of them with a different kind of voice, so that he could speak like a

man, bellow like a bull, roar like a lion, bark like a dog, and hiss like a snake. All the other gods were afraid of him and hid themselves, but Zeus armed himself with thunderbolts and went out to fight him. Typhöeus threw large masses of rock at him, and screamed with all his hundred mouths at once, but Zeus scorched him with lightning, till at last bright flames burst out all over the giant's body. Then Typhöeus howled and dashed himself to the ground, rolling over and over to try and put out the flames, but he could not succeed in doing so, for Zeus went on hurling thunderbolts at him, and the trees all round became red hot. At last Gaea began to fear that the whole earth would melt, and so she seized Typhöeus and flung him down into Tartarus, where he died.

After this Gaea gave up fighting with the young gods, for she knew that they were stronger than she was, but it was a very long time before she really made friends with them.

II.

THE GOLDEN AGE.

It was during the time when Cronus was reigning over the gods that men were first created, and this was called the Golden Age. In the Golden Age it was always springtime, and beautiful flowers blossomed the whole year round in the woods and meadows. It was not necessary for men to labour at tilling the ground, for the earth brought forth of itself everything they could possibly require: apples and melons and grapes and other fruits grew wild everywhere, and in the brooks there flowed a delicious kind of water that tasted like milk. Men, too, were good and happy, and they all lived for a long time, for three hundred years and more, and did not get old and grey, but always remained young. They had no need of houses, but lived out of doors with the beautiful earth for a carpet and the sky for a roof. Neither were there any distinctions such as we have now between rich and poor, or the upper and lower classes, but all were equal and lived together as friends. When they had lived for a long time and had had enough of life, they fell into a deep sleep and never woke again: that was their death.

The Golden Age came to an end at last, but those who had lived during that time became guardian spirits who still wander unseen over the earth and are kind to us who are now alive.

III.

PROMETHEUS AND EPIMETHEUS.

AFTER the Golden Age was over, the world went on just as it does now; summer and winter followed each other, and there were times of bad weather as well as of bright sunshine; there were also many people who had not everything they wanted, but were obliged to struggle against hunger and cold and other evils. But they were happy and contented, and had still a spark of the god-like spirit left in them, so that under the pressure of need they learnt all kinds of useful arts.

There were two brothers of the race of the gods, whose father had been a Titan and had fought against Zeus. These brothers were kind to men and lived among them; one of them was called Prometheus, or the Forethinker, because he was always looking forward and planning for the future; and the other was called Epimetheus, or the Afterthinker, because he never thought seriously about things till they had already taken place. Zeus had not gifted men with fire, but Prometheus foresaw that by the help of fire they would be able to make out of bronze and iron many useful tools and weapons which would add to their comfort. So he begged Zeus to give it to them, but Zeus said, 'They will become too clever, and at last they will think

themselves equal to the gods.' Prometheus thought it would be a noble thing to scorn the anger of Zeus and bring down fire to the earth in order to benefit mankind, and though he knew that Zeus would punish him severely for doing so, he was willing to bear that. He took a reed in which there was a great deal of pith of the same kind that still grows in warm countries and is used for fuel, and he climbed up to the sun with this reed in his hand, and held it in the blaze till it caught fire and burned like tinder. Then he came down to earth again, and made a fire which gave out warmth and a clear blaze, so that all men wondered at it. And when it was dark Zeus looked down upon the earth. There appeared to be a great many stars there, but the lights which he saw were not stars,—they were the flickering fires that men had kindled, and Zeus knew it, and was very, very angry.

Now at that time there were no such things as diseases and cares among men, so Zeus resolved to send them these unwelcome guests, because they had obtained fire against his will. The god Hephaestus fashioned a marvellously beautiful woman out of clay, and Zeus gave life to her, and the other gods endowed her with many of those gifts that call forth the love of men. They gave her goodly gifts indeed—good-nature, pleasant speech, and skill in many arts, but no one gave her an honourable, straightforward mind. The gods called her Pandora, or the All-gifted, because they had all brought her some gift. Hermes, the messenger of the gods, took her to Epimetheus and said, 'Zeus sends this beautiful woman to be your wife.' Prometheus had warned his brother not to

accept any gift from Zeus, because he knew that he would act treacherously, but when Epimetheus saw the lovely woman, he forgot that she had come from Zeus and took her home to live with him. Pandora showed him a golden casket which she said contained her dowry, and as he was very anxious to see the precious jewels he expected to find in it, he begged her to open it. But when she had taken off the lid, instead of any jewels, there were a number of winged figures inside with corpse-like faces who struggled out and flew about all over the world: these were the diseases and cares that Zeus had said he would send. They fly into the houses of men and nestle beside them without any one being able to see or hear them come in. Even now it often happens that when a man is seated at dinner with his guests, well and happy, one of the diseases flies in without any one knowing it, and in the night it seizes upon him and puts an end to all his enjoyment. Zeus had meant to send into the world a still worse fellow, called Foreboding, so that men might know all their troubles beforehand, and thus lose all pleasure in life. Foreboding was in the casket with the others, but when Pandora took off the lid, he was in such a hurry to get out that his wings caught in the inner edge of the casket, and when Pandora shut down the lid again she did not see that he was left behind. If Foreboding had come into the world, everyone would have known in childhood of the diseases and troubles in store for him in his old age, and would thus have lost all his spirits, even in his days of health.

Thus did Zeus punish men by sending disease and

care among them; but for Prometheus, who had taken the fire to them, he reserved a far severer punishment. He commanded two gods to carry him to Mount Caucasus, and the god Hephaestus, who was an excellent smith, bound him to a rock with strong iron chains so that he could neither move hand nor foot; but Hephaestus did so very unwillingly, for it seemed to him that Prometheus had done a great and god-like thing in braving the wrath of Zeus. Every morning a huge eagle came and pecked open the body of Prometheus and ate his liver, and every night the liver grew again and the body healed over it. Prometheus suffered inexpressible agony, but he never would beg for mercy from Zeus nor say that he was sorry for having brought down the fire, for he was still of the same mind about it.

But after many years had passed, there came a great hero named Heracles, who shot the eagle with his bow and arrow and delivered Prometheus. Prometheus was now free, but he was still obliged to wear on his finger a ring of the chain with which he had been bound to remind him of his punishment, and from that time it has always been the custom for people to wear rings as reminders.

IV.

EUCALION AND PYRRHA.

AFTER disease and care had come into the world, men became unkind and unfriendly; instead of peace there was now constant war, and murder and theft were more common every day. The gods were much displeased at these crimes, and Zeus said he would destroy the whole race of men by a great flood. There were, however, one man and one woman, Deucalion and Pyrrha, who took no part in the crimes that were committed, but who lived peacefully and uprightly, fearing the gods. Deucalion was the son of Prometheus, who knew everything that the gods had resolved upon though he was chained to Mount Caucasus, and when the great flood was about to take place, he advised Deucalion to provide against it by building a chest that could float on the water, so that when the flood began, he and his wife might take shelter in it.

Then a mighty rain poured down from heaven which lasted for nine days and nine nights. The valleys were soon filled with water, and the people fled for safety to the tops of the highest mountains; but the flood rose higher and higher till at last the waves washed right over the mountains, so that the people perished miserably in the water. The great chest

floated about on the top of the waves, and Deucalion and Pyrrha who were safely shut up inside it, could hear the pouring rain and the cries of the drowning people. When they were all drowned, the rain ceased and the waters began to abate, and on the next day the bottom of the chest grated against dry land. Then Deucalion burst it open, and he and Pyrrha came out into the sunshine, but all they could see was a wide stretch of sea with only the tops of the highest mountains standing out above it. The mountain where the chest had stranded was called Parnassus, and was specially dedicated to the gods. Before this time Zeus had once wanted to know where the middle of the earth was, and had let fly two doves at the same moment from the two ends of the world to see where they would meet: they met on Mount Parnassus, and thus it was proved beyond a doubt, that this mountain must be the centre of the earth.

Deucalion and Pyrrha were now the only ones remaining of the whole human race, and it was on account of their piety that Zeus had allowed them to save themselves instead of destroying them with the others. The waters abated until they no longer covered the earth, and then the grass and flowers and trees bloomed forth again as they do in spring, and Zeus sent Hermes, the messenger of the gods, to tell Deucalion and Pyrrha that they might ask for anything they pleased, and he would grant it. They determined to ask that there might again be men on the earth, and Hermes told them to go into the valley where there were a great many stones lying, and to take up the stones and throw them over their shoulders. They did

so, and this was what happened: every stone that Deucalion threw became a man, and every stone that Pyrrha threw became a woman. Deucalion was their king, and he taught them to cultivate the land, and many other useful arts. And after some time had passed the whole earth was filled with people as before, and no one would have known that the great Flood had ever taken place.

V.

THE RAPE OF PERSEPHONE.

THE goddess Demeter had a daughter named Persephone, who lived in the island of Sicily. Her mother had given her several maidens to be her playfellows, and she herself often came down from Mount Olympus to see her daughter. The maidens played and danced together, or wandered about over the hills and valleys looking for beautiful flowers, and were as happy as the days were long. One day whilst they were all scattered about looking for flowers, it happened that Persephone strayed away from the others and was quite alone. Then suddenly the earth opened beside her, and out of it there came a chariot drawn by fierce coal-black horses, in which was a man with a pale face and a black beard and a golden circlet round his hair. He put out his hand and took hold of the beautiful Persephone, and drew her into the chariot beside him. She screamed out to her companions, but it was of no use, for the man with the pale face and the black beard held her fast, and the horses ran like lightning till very soon they had disappeared under the earth and she could no longer be seen or heard. Her companions had heard her cries and they ran to look for

her, but they could not tell what had become of her.

Now when Demeter found that her daughter had been carried off she was very much distressed, and she lighted a torch and wandered all over the world trying to find her. She lit up every cranny and cavern with her torch, and climbed all the highest mountains, asking gods and men if they had seen her child, but no trace of her could she find.

I must tell you that the pale dark man was the god Pluto, the king of the Lower World. It was so dismal down there that no woman would consent to be his wife, so he made up his mind to carry off the beautiful Persephone by force, and Zeus had given him leave to do this, but he did not tell Demeter about it. Demeter wandered about for a whole year, growing every day sadder and sadder, till at last the sun-god, Helios, took pity on her. Helios could see everything that happened on the earth, and he had been looking on when Pluto ran away with Persephone, so he told Demeter that her daughter was in the Lower World, and that the gods knew all about it and allowed it. Then Demeter was angry with Zeus and the other gods for having given her so much pain, and she refused to live with them any longer, but remained on earth among men.

The gods were sorry for this, for they honoured and loved Demeter, so after a little while Zeus proposed that a council of all the gods should be held, and that they should judge between Demeter and Pluto. A day was appointed, and they all came together, Demeter and Pluto among the rest; and it was decided that if

Persephone had as yet eaten nothing since she left the earth she should return to her mother, but that otherwise she should remain in the Lower World. Now Persephone had been so sad in the Lower World that during all this time she had neither eaten nor drunk anything but once. This was one day when, as she was walking by the side of the river that flows through the Lower World and came to some pomegranate trees laden with beautiful red fruit, she plucked a pomegranate and ate it; and Pluto told this in the assembly of the gods, hoping that it would make good his claim to keep her. But the gods decreed that as she had eaten nothing but a pomegranate in the Lower World she should not remain there altogether, but only for a third of the year, and that during the remaining two thirds she should be allowed to live on the earth. So it was arranged in this way: as long as the ears of corn were below the ground, Persephone had to remain in the Lower World with her husband, but as soon as the blades appeared above the soil, she too came up into the sunlight to her mother.

At this time corn was already growing upon the earth, for Demeter had created it for the use of men, and she often wore a wreath of wheat-ears round her head. But when she was wandering over the earth looking for her daughter, she found that no one understood the best means of making it grow, and as she knew that men would be more peaceful and friendly if they cultivated the ground and surrounded themselves with beautiful plants, she determined to teach them how to do so. Demeter loved all men, but most of all a man named Triptolemus, and she gave him a

chariot drawn by two winged dragons, and put into his hand a quantity of corn, which she told him to strew over the earth. Triptolemus flew through the air in his chariot, scattering the grains of corn as he went; and then there fell a gentle rain which made them sink into the ground, so that they became firmly rooted, and soon shot forth little blades. The people were much pleased when the corn grew up and ripened, and Triptolemus taught them all that he had learnt from Demeter about the best way of cultivating it and turning it to good account. Soon there were fields of waving corn all over the earth, and instead of always going out hunting, men tilled the ground and waited for the harvest. When it was ripe, they raised altars of earth and green grass, and laid the fresh ears upon them as a thank-offering to the gods for having sent rain and sunshine to make the corn grow. Demeter especially was held in great honour, and they prayed to her when they sowed their crops.

VI.

MARPESSA.

THERE was once a king of Greece named Evenus, who had a beautiful daughter called Marpessa. There was also a brave and noble hero called Idas, and he came one day to the king and asked him to let him have Marpessa for his wife. Marpessa would have been quite willing to agree to this, but the old king was very selfish, and he said that he would not let his daughter leave him to marry anyone. So Idas had to go away with a heavy heart, but the sea-god Poseidon was his friend, and he gave him a wonderful chariot in which to carry off the beautiful Marpessa by stealth. The chariot was drawn by very swift horses, and it had wings on both sides which flapped as the horses ran, so that nothing on earth could go faster than this chariot.

One day when Marpessa went to the well to draw water, she found Idas waiting there for her in the winged chariot, and she got up beside him and drove away. The old king saw them go, and he was very angry and said that he would fetch back Marpessa and kill Idas. He had the swiftest team of horses in the whole country, and he drove them furiously along the track of the other chariot, but even at their utmost speed

they could not go fast enough to please him. At last he came to a river, and then he knew that it was hopeless to pursue his daughter and Idas any further, and he stabbed the horses and broke the chariot to pieces, and then he threw himself into the river and was drowned.

Idas was far on in front, and he thought there was no fear now of anyone attempting to interfere between him and the beautiful Marpessa. But there was a mighty god named Apollo, who loved Marpessa, and was not willing that Idas should have her for his wife, for he wanted to marry her himself. He was very beautiful in face and in form, and had the appearance of a youth just reaching the age of manhood. He was the brother of Artemis the goddess of the woods, and carried a bow of pure silver, while round his neck there hung a golden quiver full of arrows, and he could always hit whatever he aimed at, even if it were many miles off. He came and seized the horses' bridle, and said to Idas that he must either give up the maiden or else fight with him. Idas was very brave and was always quite ready to fight, and he at once jumped down from the chariot and prepared to begin the struggle. But at that moment there fell a thunderbolt on the ground between them, and they heard the voice of Zeus calling to them, and saying, 'The maiden shall decide.'

So Marpessa had to choose between a god and a hero, and she looked down and thought for a moment. Then she raised her eyes and held out her hand to Idas, and said, 'When I am old, you will be old also, and will honour me and take care of me, but

Apollo always remains young, and in my old age he would thrust me away and would take another wife.' So Marpessa made her choice and preferred to marry the hero Idas, and Apollo had to go away without her.

VII.

ARTEMIS.

ARTEMIS was the goddess of the woods. She was the daughter of Zeus and of the goddess Leto, who had gone through many troubles before Artemis was born. For Zeus had married the beautiful Leto secretly, and when Hera heard of it she was very angry, and drove her away from Mount Olympus. Leto took shelter on the earth, but Hera commanded the earth to deny her rest, and whenever she lay down it began to tremble under her and quaked horribly. She fled like a hunted deer from one end of the world to the other, till after long wanderings she came to the floating island of Delos over which the earth had no power, and here at last she could rest. The island was not fixed to the bottom of the sea, and the waves played roughly with it and tossed it about, so the sea-god Poseidon, who was sorry for Leto, caused four granite pillars to spring up and hold it fast, and ever since that time it has stood perfectly still. Leto had two children, a boy and a girl, and Zeus named them Apollo and Artemis. After the children were born, Hera became kinder, and allowed Leto to come back to Mount

Olympus, and desired the earth to give her rest wherever she wished. The island of Delos was ever afterwards held in great esteem by the Greeks, and they came from long distances in beautifully decked ships to honour the island by offering sacrifices upon it.

Artemis was a glorious goddess, and she chose the woods for her dominion, and the chase for her occupation. She delighted in wandering through the forests with the nymphs who attended her, killing wolves and wild-boars. But she was kind to the tame animals that she met, and stroked and petted them. Her favourite creatures were some beautiful hinds, and she punished anyone who killed them. Artemis towered a head above all her nymphs, and she was also easily to be recognised by her godlike beauty, and by her golden bow and quiver of golden arrows. In the evening she often laid aside her weapons and danced in the moonlight with her maidens; their light footsteps did not even bend the grass, only the next morning, traces of them could be seen in the dew. Often too, when the chase led them past a clear forest lake overshadowed by sweet-smelling trees, they undressed and bathed in the pleasant pool, and the nymphs splashed about in the water and had all kinds of games. Artemis did not marry, for she said she would neither be the wife of a god nor of a man, but would always have her home in the forest among her nymphs.

There was once a hunter named Actaeon, who loved hunting better than anything else, and who honoured Artemis, the goddess of the chase, above all other gods and goddesses. He had fifty splendid hounds who were very fond of their master, and in the morning

when he came out of his house they used to crowd round him barking for joy and licking his hands; he had given each of them a special name, and he patted them and talked to them as if they could understand him. They always went out hunting with him, and chased the wild animals which he shot with his arrows. One day Actaeon was out hunting, and it was so hot that about noon he gave his dogs a rest and let them go to sleep, whilst he himself strolled about among the cool bushes looking for a spring where he might quench his thirst. Presently he heard a splashing of water and the laughter of maidens' voices, and going a little nearer, he pushed aside the branch of a tree and beheld the glorious goddess and her nymphs in the bath. He could not turn away his eyes, and for a little while Artemis did not notice him, but when she looked up and saw the hunter who had so forgotten himself, her eyes filled with anger at his having dared to watch her. She raised her beautiful hand, and in a moment Actaeon was changed into a stag with long light feet and branching horns, but still able to think like a man. He shuddered and rushed away to the place where he had left his dogs; they awoke, but they did not know him, and gave chase to him. He tried to make them understand by looking back and calling to them, but no words would come out of his mouth, only a sound like the cry of a stag, and at last they overtook him and tore him to pieces. Thus he was miserably killed by his own dogs, as a punishment for not having turned away his eyes when he came upon the severe goddess at her bath. The dogs wandered for a long time through the forest looking for their master, pining

because they could not find him, and refusing to eat. But there was a skilled artist who took pity on them, and he made an image of clay so exactly like Actaeon, that the dogs thought it was their master himself, and were comforted.

VIII.

THE GIANTS OTUS AND EPHIALTES.

THERE was once a woman who had so great a love for the sea that she was never tired of looking at it. One day, as she was sitting on the shore, the god Poseidon came driving over the waves in his chariot, for the sea was subject to him. When he saw the beautiful woman who was gazing at it so tenderly, a great love for her sprang up in his heart, and he took her to be his wife. Some time afterwards she had two children, called Otus and Ephialtes, and by the time they were a year old they were two yards in height and a yard in width. Every year the children grew two yards in height and a yard in width, so that when they were nine years old they were so big and strong that they could tear up the largest oak trees and break them in two across their knees. But they were ignorant and foolish, and instead of honouring the gods, they made a silly plan to get up to Mount Olympus, where the gods lived, and overturn everything that they had arranged. They settled that Hera, the queen of the gods, should be the wife of Otus, and that Artemis, the goddess of the woods, should be the wife of Ephialtes, and that the other gods should be loaded with chains and imprisoned in dark caves; and they said they would change everything on the earth,

and throw all the mountains into the sea till it was choked up, and then make rivers flow where there had been land before.

The gods could hear this foolish talk, for the giants' voices were as loud as the most tremendous gale, and Ares, the god of war, armed himself and went out to fight them. But the giants were stronger than he, and they fastened him to the ground with two iron rings round his body, attached to chains which they held in their hands and pulled whenever he tried to get up, so that he could not move without great pain. They gave him nothing to eat or drink, and at mid-day the sun beat down upon his face and scorched him with its heat. None of the gods dared to try and free Ares by force, so Zeus commanded Hermes, the Messenger, to get him away by stealth. Hermes was the most cunning of all the gods, and at night, when the giants were asleep, he went and drew Ares out of the iron rings so cautiously that they made no noise, and the giants did not awake. The two gods then ran away, and the next morning the giants saw that their rings were empty, which made them very angry.

They went on for some time in their old way, boasting of all the wonderful things they were going to do, till one day the goddess Artemis changed herself into a little white doe. The giants were lying in the forest side by side, with their great hunting spears in their hands, when the little doe came running out of the wood and passed right between them. They both raised their spears at the same moment and threw them at her, but she was so swift that they did not hit her,—instead of that each giant was stabbed by his brother's spear, and they both bled to death.

IX.

ENDYMION.

As long as Zeus was with the gods on Mount Olympus, Hera, the queen of the gods, was his wife, but from time to time he came to live on the earth for a little while, and then he married a noble and beautiful woman who was his wife whilst he remained among men.

Once Zeus married a very beautiful princess whom he loved dearly, and they had a little boy named Endymion. When Endymion had grown up to be a young man, his father told him that he might wish for whatever he liked and he would grant it. Endymion might have chosen to become a mighty king, but he had no desire for anything of the sort. Instead of that, his wish was that he might go to sleep and never wake again, but always have pleasant dreams. And Zeus granted him what he asked. There was a lonely valley which no one ever came near. Soft green grass grew there, and sweet-smelling flowers, and there were shady trees, with birds singing and making their nests among the branches, and a brook flowing through it that chattered pleasantly night and day. Endymion lay down under a tree beside the brook and went to sleep, and he never grew any older, but slept on for ever, dreaming happily, immortal like the gods.

Now there was a mild, gentle goddess, the goddess of the moon, whose name was Selene. As she passed along the heaven with the little stars by her side, she used to look down upon Endymion lying asleep, and she gazed at the beautiful son of Zeus until she felt a deep love for him spring up in her heart, so that he was continually in her thoughts. She shed her softest and mildest rays upon him, and then Endymion dreamt more happily than ever. It was like no other love, for she could neither speak to him nor caress him, she could only look at him from a distance; but she has always remained true to him, and has never loved another as she loved the sleeping Endymion.

X.

IO.

THERE was once a princess named Io, whose father was king of the town of Argos, in Greece. Zeus loved Io because she was fair and gentle, and he often came down to earth in order to be with her. But Hera was angry with Zeus for going away from her, and one day when he went to see the beautiful Io, she followed him. Then Zeus changed Io into a white cow, and pretended that he had only come to look at the cow. But Hera knew it was Io, and she begged him so earnestly to make her a present of the cow that he could not refuse. Hera gave the white cow into the charge of the watchman Argus, who had a hundred eyes that slept by turns so that half of them were always on the watch. He took her to a sacred grove and tied her to an olive tree, and then he climbed a little hill that was close by, and sat there day and night watching her. Io ate grass and flowers when she was hungry, but she was very sad and lowed mournfully, for she longed to see her father and her playfellows again.

After some time Zeus commanded the crafty god Hermes to steal away the cow, and Hermes went into the wood and began to play upon the shepherd's flute. Argus called him to his side for the playing pleased

him well; so Hermes came and played all his most beautiful tunes, whilst Argus stretched himself out on the grass and enjoyed himself more than he had ever done in his life before. Then all the hundred eyes fell asleep at once, and Hermes took a sharp sickle and cut off his head. After that he loosed the cow, and was preparing to take her home to her father, but Hera, who had seen what he had done, was very angry, and she came down and commanded him to let go the cow. As Hera was mightier than he, Hermes was obliged to obey, and then Hera made a great insect as large as a bat, which buzzed horribly and tormented Io. She ran away in order to try and escape from it, but it pursued her all over the country, and even though she swam across a wide sea and went on through the country on the further side, still the insect kept flying round and round her and gave her no peace. For a whole year she fled from it, till at last when she had reached the land of Egypt in Africa she was so tired that she could go no further. Hera was just then asleep, and Zeus was able to come quickly down and kill the cruel gad-fly; then he stroked the back of the cow with his hand and she received back her human form, but she was pale and wasted, and not so beautiful as before. After this she remained in Egypt where the people of the country were good to her, but Hera was even more unkind than before, and when after a time Io had a little son, she caused the child to be stolen from her. Then Io was again in great distress, and she set out to seek for her child. She journeyed from morning to night without stopping, and she had gone through the whole country without

being able to find it and was beginning to be terribly afraid, that it must have perished, when someone told her that Hera had given it to a queen in the land of Syria to take care of. It was a long way off, and the journey was full of danger on account of robbers and wild beasts, but Io set off at once for the land of Syria, and when she got there, the queen gave back the child to her.

After this, Hera left off persecuting Io, and the King of Egypt asked her to be his wife and made her the queen. But she could never forget her past troubles, and as often as she saw a white cow, she thought of how she too had once been a cow, and had eaten grass and flowers.

XI.

DANAUS AND AEGYPTUS.

THERE were once two kings, called Danaus and Aegyptus, who were brothers, and whose dominions lay side by side. They lived in Africa, and were descended from Io, who had now been dead a long time. Aegyptus had fifty sons, and Danaus had fifty daughters. But the sons of Aegyptus were wicked men, and they tried to kill their uncle; so Danaus built a great ship with fifty oars, and when it was ready, he and his fifty daughters got into it and sailed away; each daughter took an oar, and Danaus steered. They sailed far away over the sea till they came to the country of Argos in Greece, where the father of Io had been king. The Argives (as the people of Argos were called) wondered when they saw the ship with the old man and the fifty maidens in it, but they received them kindly and gave them a large piece of land to live upon, and also a herd of fine cattle. Danaus tilled the ground, and his daughters took care of the cattle. Danaus was very wise, and he gave the Argives much good counsel, till at last they wished he could be their king. But they had a king already, who though he was not nearly so wise as Danaus, had a great many soldiers to fight

for him, and he was by no means willing to give up the kingdom. This led to many disputes among the people, and a civil war had nearly broken out, when it happened that the king, and Danaus, and many of the Argives, were assembled one day in a field where there were a number of sheep and cattle feeding, and all at once a great wolf rushed out of the forest, who, passing by the sheep and cows, ran straight at the great bull that belonged to the flock and tore him to pieces. The Argives felt sure that this must be a sign from heaven, for never before had a wolf been able to kill a strong bull. And there was a soothsayer among them who declared that as the bull had been overcome by the wolf, so would the king be overcome by Danaus and deprived of his kingdom. When the king heard that, he was afraid that he might lose his life as well as his dominions, and he fled hastily out of the country.

So Danaus became king, and lived in the beautiful palace with his daughters. His brother's sons heard that he was king of Argos, and that his daughters were beautiful maidens, and they thought they would like to be reconciled to their uncle and to have their cousins for their wives. So they built a ship like the one that Danaus had sailed away in, and came to Argos, and when they arrived there, they said to their uncle that they desired to be at peace with him, and begged him to give them his daughters in marriage. Danaus agreed to do so, and he called his daughters together and allotted one of them to each brother. A few days afterwards the wedding was celebrated with the greatest magnificence, and many sacrifices were offered to the gods. But Danaus took his daughters aside and gave to each

one a shining dagger, telling her to hide it in her dress and kill her husband with it when he was asleep. That night the fifty princes slept in fifty chambers and their wives with them, and about midnight each wife took out her dagger and stabbed her husband with it. The only one who did not do so was Hypermnestra, the most beautiful of all, who was married to one of the brothers named Lynceus. He was not wicked like the rest, but noble and brave, and Hypermnestra awoke him and said, 'Thy brothers have been killed by their wives, prepare to flee for thy life.' She gave him an unlighted torch, and told him, when he reached the mountain near the city, to light it and hold it up in the air, so that she might know that he had not been seized by the king's soldiers, but had been able to make his escape. She led him out of the palace and pointed out to him the direction in which he was to go; then she ascended to the roof, which, like all the roofs of the Greek houses, was not sloping like ours, but flat, so that people could walk upon it. Hypermnestra remained there for a long time with her eyes fixed on the mountain before any light appeared, but at last she saw a little flame which came from the torch, and then she knew that Lynceus was safe. Then she went down again with a brave heart, though she had good reason to fear that her father would be very angry.

The next morning, Hypermnestra's sisters came to Danaus, each holding in her hand the bloody head of her husband which she had seized by the hair, and Danaus praised them for what they had done; but when he asked Hypermnestra why she had not also brought him a bloody head, she said, 'I have helped

Lynceus to escape.' Now Hypermnestra was the king's favourite daughter, but he was so angry with her for having disobeyed him, that he struck her and pushed her away from him, and said that she should be tried publicly, and shut up meanwhile in a dark underground dungeon, as if she had been guilty of some crime. He called together all the old wise men in the land to be her judges, and they came and sat in the market-place to pass sentence. Danaus declared that whatever they decided on should be certainly carried out, and when the judges asked him if he would indeed abide by what they said, he swore that even if they condemned Hypermnestra to death, the sentence should be executed. The beautiful Hypermnestra was led into the market-place by the king's spearmen, and the judges questioned her. Then they consulted together and found that they were all agreed, and they said, 'What Hypermnestra deserves is that she be the king's best-beloved daughter, and that Lynceus come back and be the king's son-in-law.' That did not please Danaus, for he wished to have Hypermnestra punished, but because of his oath, he was obliged to let her go free and live in the palace as before. He also made a sacred treaty with Lynceus, and he came back to be the husband of Hypermnestra. As long as Danaus lived, he was next to him in power and wealth, and after the death of his father-in-law, he succeeded him as king of Argos.

The other daughters of Danaus, who had killed their husbands, were held in greater esteem by their father, but the gods caused them to die early, and when they came into the Lower World, they inflicted on them a

never-ending punishment. There was a stream of rushing water, close to which a great vessel had been placed, and each of the Danaïdes, or daughters of Danaus, was given a bucket and commanded to fill the vessel with water from the stream, and was told that she was never to stop pouring in the water till the vessel was quite full. The Danaïdes did as they were required, but the vessel was full of holes, so that as fast as they tried to fill it, the water ran back again into the stream, and though they did their utmost by pouring it in as fast as possible, it was of no use,—they were never able to accomplish their task, and were obliged to go toiling on at it in vain for ever.

XII.

PHAËTHON.

HELIOS was the sun-god, and he used to drive along the sky in his shining chariot drawn by four milk-white horses, who bathed themselves every evening in the great stream Oceanus that flows right round the world. As he looked down from the sky, he saw a beautiful woman whom he loved, and longed to have for his wife, so he came down to the earth and was married to her, and they had a son named Phaëthon. When Phaëthon was a little boy, his mother used to point up to the sky where his father was, and teach him to throw up kisses to him. As he grew up to be a young man he was distinguished from all others by his brave spirit and remarkable beauty, but though it was evident that he was the son of a god, there were many people who, because they were jealous of him, tried to vex him by saying that this was not really the case. This made him very anxious to show that Helios was in truth his father, and he resolved to find some means of proving it beyond a doubt. So he set out for the stream Oceanus, and when Helios brought his horses there in the evening he was rejoiced to find his son waiting for him, and he kissed him many times. Then he asked him if he had any special reason for taking such a long

journey in order to see him, and Phaëthon said it was because he had something to ask him, which he longed for more than anything else in the world. Helios promised to grant his wish, never suspecting what it was, and to please Phaëthon, he even sealed the promise by his oath as a god that he would give him whatever he should ask. The gods swore by the river Styx which flowed through the Lower World, and anyone who ventured to break that oath had to suffer a severe punishment,—for nine years he had to lie on the ground as if he were dead, and for nine years afterwards he was shut out from the company of the other gods. So when Helios had confirmed his promise by this solemn oath, Phaëthon was full of joy, and he said that his wish was that on the following day he might be allowed to take his father's place in driving the chariot of the sun. Helios was terrified at his audacity, and he told him that this was what no mortal could do and that he must give up all thought of such a thing. But Phaëthon was light-hearted, and he delighted in danger and thought he could accomplish anything he pleased, however hard it might be. He thought too, that if he had once driven the chariot of the sun and could tell people of all he had seen whilst he was doing this, everyone would be ready to acknowledge that he was indeed the son of Helios. So he would not give up his wish, and as Helios had sworn by the Styx, he was obliged to grant it, though he felt sure that it would be the death of the boy. The next morning the fiery horses were harnessed as usual, and Phaëthon clambered up into the shining chariot, more proud and happy than he had ever been in his life. The horses flew along

the usual path, and Phaëthon, looking down, could see the trees and houses and rivers on the earth. As long as he was near the earth he was very happy, but when they had got higher than eagles can fly, his head began to swim, and the horses soon found out that it was not Helios who was guiding them with his godlike wisdom, and they refused to obey the rein and keep in the right path, but flew up and down just as they pleased. First they went too near the heaven, and then they flew down lower and came too near the earth; and the flowers withered and the streams dried up, and it became so hot that the mountains began to melt. As they passed over Africa they came so near to the earth that all the people of the land were burnt black by the heat of the sun, and the black colour continued in their children and grandchildren, so that they were given the name of Moors, or black people. The goddess Gaea, who was queen of the earth, saw the trees and flowers and springs perishing miserably from the fierce blaze of the sun, and she begged Zeus not to let the earth be destroyed. Then Zeus took a thunderbolt and hurled it at Phaëthon, who fell dead from the chariot. Helios saw it with deep sorrow. He rushed forward and seized the reins and guided the chariot back into the right path, but for many days after this the heaven was covered with black clouds, and the sun-god would not let his face be seen.

XIII.

SALMONEUS AND SISYPHUS.

THERE was a country of Greece called Elis, and there was once a king of Elis named Salmoneus, whom the gods favoured in all manner of ways. If he went to war with another king he was sure to gain the victory. His fields brought forth abundant harvests, and his flocks prospered and increased. Never was there a hailstorm or any other disaster in his country. But Salmoneus was presumptuous and thought he could get everything he wished by his own cleverness, and at last he came to despise the gods and to consider himself on equal terms with them. He commanded the people to call him Zeus and to offer sacrifices to him, and he had a chariot drawn by fiery horses, with dried cows' hides and copper kettles hanging from it, which clashed and rumbled together and made a tremendous noise as he drove along, and then the people had to shout, 'Zeus is thundering!' He had also burning torches in the chariot which he threw right and left among the people, and then they had to shout, 'Zeus is lightning!' And whoever was hit by the torches was immediately killed by the king's spearmen, that it might seem as if he had been struck dead by his lightning. The gods let Salmoneus go on for

some time in this foolish way, but at last when he was one day driving through the streets with his thunder and lightning, a real thunderbolt came down from heaven which struck the king and killed him in a moment. Then the people fell to the earth in fear, and one of them said in a half-whisper, 'Zeus has indeed thundered!'

Salmoneus had a brother named Sisyphus, who was king of the city of Corinth, and surpassed all other men in deceit and craftiness. There was a cunning robber, not far from Corinth, who was very clever in stealing cattle, and when he had carried off a herd he took care to make it impossible for it to be recognised again. He painted over any white spots on the bodies or foreheads of the animals, and had various ways of obliterating all other marks by which they could be identified. Sisyphus had a beautiful herd on which the robber had for some time cast envious eyes, and one dark night he stole them away and painted over all the marks that distinguished them from any other animals. The next day Sisyphus went to the robber's dwelling and told him to give up his cattle, but the robber said he had not got them, and that Sisyphus might see for himself whether they were there or not. Then the king said that he had marked each of his cattle with a little notch on the fore foot, and that all the animals he could find marked in that way would be his. The robber had never thought of looking out for such a mark as this, and he was thus outwitted by the king and obliged to give back the beautiful herd.

No one could cheat Sisyphus, but he cheated and robbed many people, and was wicked and treacherous.

He lay in wait for those who happened to be passing through his country and spoiled them of their goods, and then he killed them by crushing them beneath a huge stone. He even tried to cheat the gods, for when he died and came into the Lower World, he begged Pluto to give him leave to go back to the Upper World again for one day in order to divide his kingdom between his sons, and as he swore by the most sacred oaths that he would return at the end of that time, Pluto granted his request; but Sisyphus did not return until a messenger was sent to fetch him from the earth for the second time. And because he had been so wicked and deceitful both in life and in death, the gods laid upon him a heavy punishment, to which there was no end. He was told to roll a fearfully heavy stone up the side of a mountain, until he had brought it to the top and let it fall down the further side. But it was an enchanted stone, and every time that, with the greatest effort, Sisyphus had at last got it almost to the top of the mountain, it suddenly rolled back with a crash into the depths from which he had brought it, so that he had to begin his work all over again; and thus he never could succeed in accomplishing his task, and his toil was never at an end.

XIV.

BELLEROPHON.

In the city of Corinth there were two young brothers, the sons of Glaucus, the son of Sisyphus, one of whom was called Bellerophon, and was gifted by the gods with great strength and beauty. But one day, when he was out hunting with his brother, he threw his spear at a hind, and the spear missed its aim and accidentally hit his brother, who died of the wound. Bellerophon was very much grieved, and wished he could have been killed himself rather than have done this; but nevertheless he had to leave his father's house and the city of Corinth, for everyone who killed another by accident was banished. He set out, not knowing who would receive him, but he determined first of all to seek for someone who would purge him from the stain of blood; for the Greeks held that whoever had killed another, even though unintentionally, was defiled, and needed to be purified by means of sacrifices and baths. It was not everyone who understood how to do this, but Bellerophon heard that King Proetus was learned in these matters, and he went to him and begged him to purify him. Proetus did what was necessary, and as the young hero pleased him, he begged him to stay with him and be his guest, and

treated him as his own son. But the queen was so much struck with the beauty of Bellerophon that she longed to have him for her husband, and she had a secret conversation with him, and proposed that they should both flee out of the country and be married. But Bellerophon could not have acted so ungratefully towards his kind host if the queen had been the most beautiful woman in the world, and he told her plainly that he would not do as she wished. Then all her fondness was turned into hatred and a fierce desire to kill him, and she went to her husband and said that Bellerophon had begged her to go away with him and be his wife, and that when she had refused, he had got angry and had said he should put the king to death. The king believed his wife and was exceedingly angry, but as Bellerophon was his guest, he would not himself lay hands on him. He thought of another way of taking his life, and concealing his resentment, asked Bellerophon if he would take a message from him to his father-in-law Iobates, who was king of Lycia. It was a long distance by sea as well as by land to the country of Lycia, but Bellerophon was glad to do anything to please Proetus, and he at once promised to go. Proetus took a wooden tablet, and made signs upon it to signify that his father-in-law was to put the messenger to death, and then he covered the tablet with another, and tied a string round it. This was the way in which all letters were sent at that time, for paper and ink were not yet invented.

Bellerophon took the letter and set out, suspecting nothing. He travelled for some time till he came to the sea, where he found a ship about to sail to the

opposite coast, so he got into it, and after a few days' journey, arrived at the country of King Iobates who received him in a very friendly manner. It was not then the custom to ask a guest his name and his business as soon as he arrived, and for nine days Iobates entertained Bellerophon without knowing who he was, and every day he sacrificed a bull, and feasted with his guest. The Greeks used to cut off the thigh-bones of the animals they sacrificed, for the gods; they covered these bones with skin and placed them in the fire to make a pleasant odour for them, and then they consumed the rest of the animal themselves. On the tenth day, King Iobates asked his guest what his name was and whether he had brought any message, and Bellerophon told his name and delivered the letter which Proetus had sent. But when the king had made out the meaning of the signs, he was greatly troubled, for he had become very fond of the young hero, and the idea of killing him had been far from his thoughts. Still, as his son-in-law urged him to do this, he supposed that Bellerophon must have committed some great crime, and he determined to carry out the wishes of Proetus. He might have murdered Bellerophon in his sleep, but he would not do that,—he willed rather that he should die like a hero, fighting for his life. There was at that time in the land of Lycia a horrible monster called the Chimaera, whose forepart was like a lion, her back like a dragon, and in the middle she was a goat. At night the Chimaera remained on her mountain, but in the daytime she came down and laid waste the cornfields and devoured men and cattle, causing great distress all over the country. The king asked Belle-

rophon whether he had courage enough to encounter the monster, and Bellerophon said yes, for he longed to be a real hero whose exploits men relate in song, and he was ready to venture upon any errand however dangerous it might be. So he armed himself with spear and sword, and set out in search of the Chimaera.

The gods were pleased with him for his courage, but they knew that he must perish in the fight if they did not help him. He had not gone far when there came down from heaven a beautiful horse with wings like a bird, which flew round and round him. This horse was called Pegasus, and belonged to the gods. Bellerophon was delighted with the beautiful animal, and tried to attract him by whistling and coaxing. At last he persuaded him to come near enough to be stroked, and after that the hero soon succeeded in placing himself on his back, and they flew away together through the air. Bellerophon was the first man who had ever ridden upon such a horse. He would have found Pegasus a perfect steed if he had understood what was said to him, but instead of doing as he wished, he always went the wrong way. So he dismounted and continued his journey on foot, and Pegasus flew round him in beautiful curves, and was his travelling companion. By-and-by he met an old man who was a soothsayer, and he asked the hero how he came to possess such a beautiful animal. Bellerophon told him all about it, and added that he wished he knew how to make the horse obedient to his will, and then the soothsayer said that he would soon come to a place dedicated to the goddess Athene, and that if anyone who was in need of counsel chose to sleep in the temple,

the goddess would often help him by a dream. Bellerophon resolved to try this, and as the stars were beginning to shine, he reached the temple of Athene and he went in and stretched himself on the floor with his head resting on the step of the altar for a pillow, while the horse slept outside the door. When it was nearly morning, the goddess Athene appeared to him in a dream and told him that she loved all brave heroes, and was glad to help him. She showed him a golden ribbon, and said that if he put it into the mouth of the horse and held the two ends in his hand, it would be a means of communication between them. She placed the golden ribbon in his hand, and he awoke, still holding it. It was the first bridle, and had been invented by the goddess Athene. He went out at once, put the ribbon into the mouth of the horse, and swung himself on to his back. Then they flew away, and the steed obeyed the rein, and went just where the hero wished. Bellerophon was very much pleased at this, and he offered up prayers and thanks to Athene for the help she had given him.

After this Bellerophon continued his journey through the air, and when it was evening he came to a mountain by the sea from which he saw a flame of fire ascending, and this showed him where the Chimaera was. He flew towards the place on the back of Pegasus, and perceived the horrible form of the monster. Pegasus hovered over her, and Bellerophon shot an arrow which wounded her in the neck and gave her great pain; this made her furious, and she stood up on her hind feet and puffed out her fiery breath into the air, hoping to scorch Bellerophon to death. But he was so

high up that he was not hurt by it, and he shot her in the back with another arrow, so that she rolled about in pain, howling horribly, and then he sent a third arrow into her side. She had now only strength enough to moan, and in a little while she was dead. Then Bellerophon could come down to the mountain which was no longer unsafe for people to set foot upon; he slept there that night, and in the morning he cut off the head of the Chimaera, and set out upon his way home again.

When Bellerophon stood before Iobates with the head of the Chimaera in his hand, the king was very much astonished, for he had thought there was not a chance that he would escape being killed by her. But he was still desirous of carrying out the wishes of Proetus, and he therefore sent the hero to fight against a barbarous people on the outskirts of his kingdom, who lived by plunder and robbery. No one who had hitherto been sent against them had ever returned alive, but the gods helped Bellerophon, and he slew a great many of the robbers and drove away the rest.

A third time the king sent him away, and now it was to fight against a still stronger people. But after a few days had passed, there came messengers to tell him that the hero had put the enemy to flight and was about to return. Then the king chose out the strongest Lycian youths, and set them in ambush on the road leading to the city. In the evening, however, Bellerophon entered the palace unhurt. The king thought he must have come by another road, and he asked him if he had met nothing on the way. Bellerophon answered, 'Near the city there were some

cowardly knaves lying in ambush, whom I slew.' Then the king knew that Bellerophon must be under the protection of the gods, and he laid aside all thoughts of doing him any injury, and told him that on account of the request of Proetus he had sent him on these expeditions in order that he might meet his death, but that from henceforth he would be his friend. He gave him the most beautiful of all his daughters for his wife, and begged him to stay with him and take part in the government of the country. The wedding soon took place, and from that time Bellerophon had a kingly staff like Iobates, and sat beside him on the throne to give judgment in all cases of difficulty. The Lycians gave him some of their land for his own, of which one part consisted of corn-fields, another part was a wine country, and the third was planted with beautiful fruit trees. The winged horse Pegasus was well taken care of, and Bellerophon ever treasured him as one of his dearest friends.

XV.

DAEDALUS AND ICARUS.

THERE was once a king of Crete called Minos, who had a great many ships and soldiers; and there was also a clever artist named Daedalus, who had built a wonderful house for Minos with such an immense number of rooms in it that no one who entered it could ever find his way out again. There lived a monster in the house, and every year prisoners were taken to it, who wandered about trying in vain to find their way out again, until at last the monster came and devoured them. This wonderful house was called the Labyrinth.[1] The king wanted Daedalus to spend his time and skill in inventing other wonderful things for him, and when he wished to leave the island he refused to let him go, and placed soldiers all along the shore to prevent him from getting to any ship. Then Daedalus said to himself, 'My art has hitherto served the king,—it shall now serve me.' So he went into his workshop, and made a pair of large wings for himself and a pair of small ones for his little son Icarus, and every night when it was dark they fastened their wings on to their shoulders with wax, and practised flying like the birds; and they soon became quite accustomed to using them. When they had

[1] For more about the Labyrinth, see p. 186.

learnt to fly properly, they fastened on their wings early one morning and set off to fly to the island of Sicily, although that is a good hundred miles from the island of Crete. On the shore stood the soldiers whom the king had placed there to prevent them from leaving, but they could not catch them, and the two flew away together over the wide sea. At first Icarus was timid, but when a good stretch of the way lay behind them he became bolder, and began to think that flying was very pleasant work. At mid-day, however, the sun came out very hot, and Daedalus, who was flying on in front to show the way, called out to his child to tell him to beware of the sun and not go too near it. But Icarus thought, 'The sun looks so kind, I am sure he will do me no harm.' And he flew higher and higher, for Daedalus was on in front and did not see him, until the wax with which his wings were fastened began to melt. He felt the strokes becoming more feeble, and called to his father for help, but though Daedalus turned quickly round it was too late,—the boy could no longer support himself in the air, and he fell into the sea before his father's eyes. All the great skill of Daedalus was of no avail now, for Icarus was killed by the great fall, and he could do nothing to save him, but was obliged to fly on to the end of his journey all alone.

XVI.

EUROPA AND CADMUS.

In the land of Phenicia which lies in Asia, there was once a king who had a son named Cadmus and a daughter named Europa, and he was both fond and proud of his children, for Cadmus was brave, and Europa was beautiful. One day Europa was by the sea in a meadow full of lovely flowers, when there came a stately bull, who walked round and round her. It was Zeus, who had changed himself into a bull in order to carry off the beautiful maiden to be his wife. At first Europa was afraid of the bull, but he had such nice soft eyes that she could not help being kind to him. She stroked him and made friends with him, and then she gathered some flowers and twined them into a wreath, and when the bull stretched himself on the ground, she climbed on to his back and placed the beautiful wreath round his horns. But he instantly sprang up, and ran away with her so fast that she did not venture to jump off, but could only hold on to his horns and scream with all her might. The people in the field heard her cries, and soon they saw the bull run into the sea with her and swim away. They went and told the old king, and he at once sent off a ship in pursuit, but though it sailed about in all directions, it came

back in the evening without having been able to find any trace of Europa. The old king was very much troubled and would neither eat nor drink, and on the third day he called his son Cadmus and commanded him to set out in search of his sister and not to turn back until he had found her.

Cadmus chose companions for his journey, and they launched a ship and sailed away. They passed through many lands inquiring for the beautiful Europa and the bull, but nobody had seen them. At last they came into the land of Greece, and when Cadmus again inquired for his sister, the people told him that he had better go to Delphi and ask the priestess of Apollo about her. The city of Delphi was on Mount Parnassus, the centre of the earth, and there was a temple of Apollo there which was an Oracle or prophetic temple. If anyone wished to know something past or future which he could not find out in any other way, he went to the temple of Apollo and asked the priestess, who was called the Pythia, about it. There was a narrow opening in the floor of the temple which had not been made by man, and which went deep down into the earth. A wonderful odour ascended from the crevice, and a golden three-legged stool, called a Tripod, was placed over the opening. When anyone came to ask a question, the Pythia seated herself upon the Tripod and became inspired by the odour, and the god Apollo directed what she should say in answer, so that her predictions were divine utterances. These predictions were called Oracles.

Cadmus accordingly went to Delphi, and took with him a beautiful golden cup as a present for the god, that

he might answer him graciously. There were many costly vessels of gold and silver and other similar things in the temple, which had been given in this way as presents. Cadmus asked the Pythia where Europa had gone, and she answered that it was Zeus who in the form of the bull had carried her away and had hidden her from all men, and that Cadmus was no longer to seek for her, but to follow *the white cow* and to found a city in the place where she should lie down. She also told him that his father was dead and that a stranger had taken possession of his kingdom.

Cadmus did not understand which was the cow he was to follow, but he left the temple, and when he came outside he saw a spotless white cow who looked at him as if she had been waiting for him. She started off along the road, and he followed her. They walked on all day and all night, and in the morning they found themselves on a beautiful hill with a fertile country all round, and there the cow lay down. Cadmus desired to sacrifice the cow to the gods, and he sent one of his companions to some bushy ground near at hand where he heard a spring bubbling, to draw some water for the sacrifice. But the companion did not come back, so Cadmus sent another, but he did not come back either. Then he went himself, and found a hideous dragon keeping watch by the spring, who had devoured his two companions. The dragon started up with the intention of devouring him also, but Cadmus drew a sharp sword, and thrust it into the neck of the monster with such force that a great stream of blood gushed out and he died. Cadmus was still standing looking at the dragon when the goddess Athene appeared to him and told

him that he must take out the dragon's teeth and sow them in the ground, and that from this strange seed there would spring warriors who would help him to build a city and would be his subjects. Then the goddess disappeared, and Cadmus took out the teeth, of which there were a great many, and put them into his helmet; and as he turned away from the spring, he saw a plough standing in the field with two bulls yoked to it. Cadmus drove the plough up and down, and dropped the teeth one by one into the furrows which it had made. For a short time they remained just where he had placed them, but presently they began to disturb the soil by their movements and to rise above it by degrees. First there appeared a row of brazen helmets, and then a row of bearded faces underneath the helmets, and then followed glittering coats of mail, and when the warriors got their arms free, they were able to help themselves completely out, and brushed off the dust that was clinging to them. They were clothed in brass from head to foot, and each held in his right hand a spear, and in his left a shield. Cadmus was afraid of the armed band, and thought of a plan for making them quarrel with one another. He took up a number of little stones and threw them at the newly-born warriors from behind a bush, and as they could not see where the stones came from, each of them thought that his neighbour had struck him, and hit him back again, so that there was soon a fierce battle raging among them, and man after man was killed. When there were only five left, Cadmus stepped forward and proclaimed peace, and said, 'The gods have given you to me as my subjects; let us build a city.' They agreed to do as

he said, and built a city on the hill which they called the Cadmea, after Cadmus their king, and by degrees many people came to settle in it. The five warriors who had sprung from the dragon's teeth were called Sparti or Sown Men, and they were the next in power to the king. The gods loved Cadmus, and they gave him a beautiful wife called Harmonia, who was the daughter of Ares, the god of war, and of Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty. All the gods gave costly wedding gifts, and when the marriage was celebrated in the Cadmea, the guests, both gods and men, feasted together.

Zeus had carried Europa across the Mediterranean Sea to the land which lies opposite to Asia, and all the country on this side of the Mediterranean Sea has ever since that time been called Europe.

XVII.

THE BUILDING OF THEBES.

After the death of Cadmus many more people came to live in the Cadmea, and when there was no more room on the hill, they established themselves in the plain round it and built more and more houses, till there came to be a great city to which they gave the name of Thebes. The Cadmea then became the castle or citadel of Thebes; the king's palace was inside it, and it was fortified with very strong walls, so that if the city were besieged by enemies, the inhabitants could take shelter in the citadel and hurl darts and javelins at their enemies from its walls.

There was once a king of Thebes named Amphion, who could sing most beautifully, and also play upon the lyre. When he sang, it was impossible for anyone to resist stopping to listen, however great a hurry he might be in, and even the very stones would detach themselves from their places in order to come nearer to him. Amphion knew this, and one day he said to himself, 'Since I have such power over the stones, I will make them serve me.' So he sat down in the middle of the city, and began to sing in a loud voice which was echoed by the distant hills. Then there was a sound of rumbling and scuffling, for every stone

that heard the song, no matter how far off it was, came rushing towards Amphion, and they heaped themselves one upon the other till at last a great stone wall was built up all round the city; and the Thebans took hatchets and crowbars and broke open seven spaces in it, where they erected seven great gates.

XVIII.

SEMELE.

CADMUS and Harmonia had two daughters, one of whom was a very beautiful maiden named Semele. Zeus loved Semele and made her his wife secretly, and she was so happy that she wished for nothing else than that the king of the gods should always continue to love her as he did then. But Hera was very angry about it, and she took the form of an old nurse to whom Semele told all her secrets, and came one day into the palace when the nurse had gone to the river to wash clothes. She was the only person who knew that Zeus was the husband of Semele, and Hera, who had taken her form, pretended that she had come back in order to give her some advice about it. She told her that she ought to make trial of Zeus, and beg him to come to her, if it were only for once, in all the glory and splendour with which he surrounded himself when he was with Hera, and that if he refused to do so, it would prove that he was not really Zeus, but some mortal who had deceived her. She said this in order to make Semele suspicious and distrustful, and because she wanted to bring about her destruction; and when she had finished talking she went quickly back to Mount Olympus, and no one knew that she had been in the Cadmea.

Semele did not for a moment believe that her husband was any other than Zeus, but she was dazzled with the thought that she might persuade her lover to come to her surrounded with the glory of the gods, and so she took Hera's advice, and next time that Zeus came to see her, she begged him to swear by the Styx that he would grant her the request she was about to make. Hera had advised her to make him swear by the Styx, because that was the oath which the gods could never break if they bound themselves by it. Zeus swore without any misgiving, for he expected her to wish that suddenly beautiful flowers should spring up all round the Cadmea, or that he should fly with her through the air, or perform some other such miracle; but when Semele begged that he would come to her that evening exactly as if he were coming to Hera, he regretted that he had sworn so rashly, and told her that the fulfilment of such a wish as that, would cost her her life. But Semele thought that he despised her, and did not care to show himself to her in all his godlike splendour, and she persisted in her request; and as he had sworn by the Styx, Zeus was obliged to submit to her foolish will. When the evening came, a terrible rumbling sound was heard in the air, and it thundered and lightened, and Zeus came down from Mount Olympus in the chariot of the gods. He entered the Cadmea, and Semele beheld his countenance glowing with unspeakable beauty and majesty, but the splendour and glory that surrounded him was a sight which no mortal could bear, and she was struck dead by that one look.

XIX.

DIONYSUS.

DIONYSUS was the son of Zeus and of Semele, and Hera hated him as she had hated his mother, and would have killed him if she could; so as soon as he was born, Zeus commanded Hermes to take him away secretly to a king called Athamas, that Hera might not know where he was. Athamas promised to take care of him, and the queen, whose name was Ino, told everyone that he was her own child, and brought him up with her two little boys. But Hera found out where the little Dionysus was, and she was so angry with King Athamas for having consented to hide him from her, that she punished him by making him quite mad. She falsified his sight so that everything seemed to him quite different from what it really was, and one day when he was coming home from hunting and saw Ino sitting on the grass in front of the house with her two little boys by her side, he thought she was a doe with two little fawns, and he took an arrow and shot one of the children right through the heart, so that he was killed instantly. Ino saw that her husband was mad, and she immediately snatched up the other child and fled away with it, but Athamas pursued her with another arrow on his bow-string till they came to the

sea, and then, as Ino could flee no farther, she rushed into the sea with her little boy, and they were both drowned. They were scarcely dead when Athamas regained his right senses and knew what he had done, and he was so grieved and shocked that he left his country altogether, and wandered for a long time in strange lands, till at last he settled down again, as you will hear in another story.[1]

Meanwhile Hera was looking everywhere for the little Dionysus, but she could not find him, for she did not know that a young heifer who was grazing in front of the house was the form into which Zeus had changed the child to hide him from her. In the night Hermes came and took the heifer up into his arms, and it became a child again. Then he took the boy a long, long journey, almost to the end of the world, till at last he reached a lonely region where seven nymphs lived by a beautiful river far from the dwellings of men, and he gave him into the charge of the nymphs, who promised to bring him up and take great care of him. Hera was seated on Mount Olympus, the throne of the gods, and she cast her eyes all round the world to see what had become of Dionysus, but as she expected to find him again in the charge of some king, she did not think of looking for him in the country of the nymphs.

When Dionysus grew up to be a young man, he was very beautiful, and Zeus loved him so much that he gifted him with the might of a god. Immediately his face gained a new expression, and his eyes glowed with a fire that is never seen in the eyes of men.

[1] See page 150.

Dionysus thought he would like to give proof of his new power by bestowing some precious gift upon men, and he resolved that he would create out of water and sunshine a sweet drink that should give them courage and cheerfulness, and that a beautiful plant should be the means of producing this drink. So he created the Vine with its purple grapes, in which, ever since that time, the sun has every year brewed the drink bestowed upon men by the god Dionysus.

Dionysus did not wish to live in concealment any longer, for Hera had no power to injure him now that he had become a god, and he desired to be known and honoured like the other gods. He determined therefore to travel through the whole world, and Zeus gave him a train of men and women to follow and serve him who were called Bacchantes, or followers of Bacchus, which is another name for Dionysus. He set out on his pleasure-journey, driving in a golden chariot drawn by two tame spotted panthers which he guided with a golden rein, and round him danced the Bacchantes, holding in their hands wands twined round with ivy, and with ivy wreaths on their heads. Cups of the most delicious wine were passed from mouth to mouth, and the whole air was filled with the sounds of singing and flute-playing. There was an old man named Silenus, who had formerly lived with the nymphs, and had been accustomed to play with Dionysus when he was a child, and dance him on his knees. He now joined in the procession, and he was so fond of the wine that he was always intoxicated. His body became bloated with drinking so much wine, so that he could not walk steadily, but was obliged to ride on an ass, and

often in his drunken condition, he sate facing the wrong way and holding the tail of the ass in his hands as a bridle.

Wherever Dionysus went he caused the vine to grow, and he was good to those who honoured him, but he punished all who disobeyed him. One day, while he was on his journey through the world, he halted at mid-day in a cool wood near the sea, and when the Bacchantes had given the thirsty panthers some sweet wine to drink, the whole train of followers lay down under the trees and went to sleep. Dionysus, however, was filled with a desire to visit the island of Naxos, which he loved above all other lands, and he went down to the shore where there was just then a ship sailing by, and asked the ship-men if they would carry him to Naxos; and they said 'Yes,' and sailed up to the land and took him in. They did not know who he was, but supposed him to be a mortal youth, and seeing that he was so beautiful, they made up their minds to sell him for a slave, for they were not good men, but thieves. Dionysus lay down in the ship and went to sleep. When he awoke, they had already sailed past the island, so he begged them to turn back and set him on shore at Naxos, but they laughed and told him they were going to sell him for a slave. Dionysus had only wanted to make trial of them, and now the ship suddenly stood still, and though they tried with all their might to row on farther, it was as immovable as if it had been fastened to the bottom of the sea with a hundred chains. And vines and ivy-bushes sprang up and covered the sides of the ship with green foliage, and a spray of ivy twined itself round the mast

right up to the top, so that the ship looked like a beautiful garden in the middle of the sea. But the sight of it gave no pleasure to the ship-men; their flesh began to creep, and they were seized with an irresistible desire to jump into the sea. And as they jumped they were changed into dolphins, and for the rest of their lives they swam about in the sea, thieving fishes as they had been thieving men. Then Dionysus clapped his hands, and the panther-drawn chariot came over the sea to him followed by the Bacchantes, the sea making a pathway for them so that they scarcely wetted their feet. Dionysus got into his chariot and guided it to Naxos, and the Bacchantes followed it, skipping along on the crests of the waves.

After Dionysus had travelled over the whole world, it was fitting that he should take up his abode on Mount Olympus with the other gods, and Hera did not make any difficulty about it. But before he did so, he brought his mother Semele from out of the Lower World, and Zeus made her immortal, so that she also had a place among the gods, and Hera no longer bore her any ill-will.

XX.

MELAMPUS AND BIAS.

In the city of Pylos there lived a man named Melampus, who was very rich, and had a great deal of land and many servants. One day, as the servants were coming home from their work in the fields, they found a nest of snakes in a hollow oak, and they drove out the snakes and began to beat them to death with their sticks and cudgels. Just then Melampus came by, and when he saw what the servants were doing, he let them kill the old snakes, but finding among them two young ones less than a foot long, he took them up and carried them home. The little snakes were now very well off, for Melampus made them a bed of leaves and gave them plenty of food to eat. They were not poisonous snakes, but nice harmless little creatures, and when they grew older they had a great wish to do Melampus some service, as a return to him for having saved their lives and taken such care of them. So one day, when he was asleep, the snakes crept up to him, one on each side, and licked his ears with their fine sharp little tongues, and when he awoke he found he could understand what the birds and insects said, and he was ever afterwards able to discover things that were hidden from other men, because the birds told him about them.

At this time there reigned over the city of Pylos a king named Neleus, who had an only daughter called Pero. She was so beautiful that no one who had once seen her ever cared to look at any other woman, and many princes came to Pylos to ask for her hand in marriage, but King Neleus said that whoever wished to have her for his wife must first bring him the cattle of Iphiclus, and that he would not part with her on any other condition. These cattle were renowned for their strength and beauty, and they were always spoken of as the cattle of Iphiclus, although Iphiclus himself had been dead a long time, and his son Phylacus now owned them. They were guarded by a great fierce dog with a terrific voice, and if anyone came to try and steal them, he barked so loudly that all the servants of Phylacus came rushing out to seize the thief and carry him off to prison. Nor could Phylacus be induced to part with the cattle for any sum of money; so when the suitors heard that the king insisted upon having the cattle of Iphiclus, they thought it was a hopeless case and went away home again.

Now amongst those who came to sue for the hand of the beautiful Pero, there was a man named Bias, the brother of Melampus, who loved her so dearly and wished so much to have her for his wife, that he lost all his spirits and fell into deep despondency because he could not think of any means of obtaining the cattle. Melampus had a great affection for his brother and longed to help him in this difficulty, so he asked the birds if there was any way by which he could succeed in procuring the cattle for Bias. The birds answered that if he would be willing to be seized

by the servants and put into prison for a year, he would be able to obtain the cattle at the end of that time. Melampus was quite ready to do this for his brother, and he set out at once, promising Bias that at the end of the year he would return with the beautiful herd. When he came to the field where the cattle of Iphiclus were grazing, it happened to him just as the birds had foretold, and he was taken prisoner by the servants and thrust into a dark dungeon. He could never see the sun there, but he was able to count the days, for he could hear the birds singing, and when they began to chirp in the morning, he knew that a new day must have dawned upon the earth. At last, when there was only one day wanting to make up the full year, he heard some wood-worms talking together in one of the rafters of the house, and he listened to what they were saying. One asked, 'Have you nearly finished the work?' and the others answered, 'Before the sun goes down, the beam will be eaten through and the house must fall.' Then Melampus understood that the house was not safe, and he called the gaoler and told him that they ought both to leave it without delay, for that before the setting of the sun it would fall. The gaoler was not inclined to believe him, for the house appeared to be in perfect condition, but Melampus would not leave off warning and entreating him, and at last he took him to another prison. They had scarcely left the house when they heard a great noise, and as they looked back it fell in ruins. The gaoler was very much astonished that Melampus should have known of this beforehand, and he told King Phylacus about it.

The old king was at this time in great sorrow on

account of his son, who was named Iphiclus after his grandfather. He had been married for many years, but the gods gave him no children, and the old king feared that after his death the kingdom would fall into the hands of a stranger instead of being still governed by one of his own race. He did not know why the gods were angry with his son, and no one was able to tell him. When therefore he heard from the gaoler how Melampus had foretold the downfall of the prison, he thought that he must be a wise man, and he asked him whether he could find any means of freeing him from his anxiety. Melampus answered that he would try to do so if the king would promise him the beautiful cattle as his reward, and Phylacus did not think this too great a price, but swore to give them to him. Melampus then begged that the king's servants might kill a cow and cut it in pieces, and that they would take him to an open field, and leave him alone with the flesh beside him. They did as he wished, and when the servants had gone away, a number of birds of all sizes came flocking towards the pieces of flesh. Melampus, however, would not let them come too near, but kept them off with a stick, and said, 'Whichever of you can tell me why the gods are angry with Iphiclus the Younger, shall have the best piece of meat as a reward.' Then an old raven, nearly a hundred years old, began to croak and said, 'When Iphiclus was a little boy, his father placed a sacrifice under a sacred oak, but found himself obliged to return to the house for something he had forgotten. Meanwhile the little Iphiclus was left alone, and he took the sacrificial knife and thrust it into the oak because he was fright-

ened at the way it glittered. I was sitting on the tree looking on when he did this. In the course of time, however, the bark has quite grown over the knife, so that it cannot now be seen.' Melampus gave the raven a great piece of flesh, and he took it in his claws and flew away with it, and Melampus said, 'Whichever of you can tell me how this may be expiated, shall have the next best piece.' Then a vulture came forward who was skilled in medicine, and a physician among the birds, and who knew how to give counsel, and he said, 'You must dig the knife out of the tree, and when you have found it, scrape off the rust and pour it into a bowl of wine. Let the king's son drink that, and then the gods will send him an heir.' The vulture received the second best piece, and Melampus went away, leaving the birds to feast upon the remainder of the flesh. He went back to the palace and asked for an axe, with which he struck the oak, and at the first stroke he discovered the knife. It was quite red with rust, and he drew it out and scraped off the rust into a bowl of wine and told the king that his son must drink some of this every morning for ten days, and then the gods would be gracious to him. Some time after this the wife of Iphiclus had a little son, which was a great joy to the old king.

He did not fail to give Melampus the reward he had promised, and Bias took the cattle to the palace of Neleus and again asked to be allowed to marry the beautiful Pero. The king made no further objection, and the wedding was celebrated that very same day.

The god Apollo loved Melampus because he was a

good man, and he gifted him with the art of knowing the future by means of various signs, and of understanding how to propitiate the wrath of the gods. Many people came to ask advice of him when they were in trouble or difficulty, and among others, Proetus the king of Argos, sent to beg for his help, for he was in great distress. This king had three daughters who were beautiful and virtuous, but they refused to offer sacrifices to the god Dionysus, and therefore Dionysus punished them by taking away their reason, so that they became mad. They ran about the city, dancing and screaming and tearing their clothes, and if anyone tried to restrain them they became wilder still, and foamed at the mouth, so that no one could see them without feeling deeply grieved. It was on account of this that Proetus sent to Melampus to beg him to make his daughters well again. Melampus agreed to do so if the king would promise him a third of his dominions as a reward; but when Proetus heard of the condition, avarice prevailed over his love for his daughters, and he refused to part with any of his land. But the evil became worse and worse, for all the women in the country were seized with the same disease as the princesses, and ran about the streets and fields, raging as if they were intoxicated. Many had taken their little children with them, thinking that they were young deer which they must sacrifice to Dionysus, and it was a ghastly sight to see them murder their own children, not knowing what they were doing. The whole land was in such great trouble that the king sent a messenger to tell Melampus that he would give him the third part of his dominions if he would put an end to the misery, but Melampus

now said that he must also give his brother Bias a third, or he would do nothing for him. The king was very loth to give away so much fertile territory, but he feared that he might at last be obliged to win over Melampus at any price, and perhaps lose his whole kingdom, so he promised to give him what he asked. Then Melampus went to Argos and placed himself at the head of all the young men in the city, whom he had told beforehand what they were to do. They marched out of the city in an orderly band, till they met the raving women who had formed themselves into a sort of wild army with the princesses at their head. As soon as they saw the army of youths they took flight, and the men pursued them, shouting as if they were at war, till they reached the sea and could go no farther. Then Melampus offered many sacrifices, until the gods were propitiated and the women had their reason restored. After this, they all returned to the city. The eldest princess, who was the most afflicted of all, had fallen down dead during the chase, but the other two came back to the palace and lived with their father as before, and from this time they honoured Dionysus and offered sacrifices to him.

Melampus and Bias now became princes, and they ruled over the land which King Proetus gave them according to his promise.

XXI.

TANTALUS. PELOPS.

In the land of Phrygia, which lies in Asia Minor, there was once a king named Tantalus, whom the gods loaded with all manner of favours. They gave him great wealth, so that he was richer than any other king, and they treated him as a friend and came to his house as guests, and sometimes they allowed him to ascend to Mount Olympus in one of their chariots and to drink nectar and eat ambrosia at their table. But Tantalus was presumptuous, and turned the friendship with which the gods honoured him to bad uses, for he stole nectar and ambrosia and gave them to other men to taste, and he also repeated things that he had heard the gods speak of among themselves, about which he ought to have kept silence. He even once invited the gods to a banquet in order to try and deceive them, and for this purpose he killed his beautiful young son Pelops, and cut him in pieces and roasted the flesh; and when the gods sat down to the banquet he brought in the flesh and laid it before them, thinking that they would eat it without knowing what it was. The goddess Demeter was at this time in great trouble because her daughter Persephone had been stolen away from her, and as she sat buried in sad thoughts, she eat a shoulder-

piece without paying attention to what she was doing. But the other gods did not eat any of the flesh, for they knew directly what it was, and they were very angry with Tantalus. Zeus commanded that Pelops should come to life again, and he was even more beautiful than before, but his right shoulder was missing, for Demeter had eaten it. The goddess could not replace it, but she took a piece of ivory and cut out a shoulder, which she fitted into the right place, so that it looked like the other limbs, only it was more white and shining.

After this the gods would have nothing more to do with Tantalus, and as they no longer blessed his fields or flocks, his prosperity was now at an end, for the fields produced miserable crops, and the flocks were diminished by plagues and diseases, and also by the ravages of wolves and lions. Tantalus became worse and worse, and committed many other crimes, and after his death the gods laid upon him a never-ending punishment. He found himself standing in beautiful clear water which reached up to his chin, and close above his head there hung branches of magnificent fruit trees quite weighed down with the quantity of fruit they bore, but whenever he tried to sip the water it sank before him till there was nothing to be seen but the black earth, and whenever he tried to gather some fruit the branches raised themselves into the air, so that though he was parched with thirst and was perpetually straining to quench it, if but for a moment, he was never able to reach either the water or the fruit.[1]

[1] From this story comes the English word 'to tantalize.'

After the death of Tantalus, his son Pelops was king of Phrygia. But there came another king, with an army of soldiers, who fought against him and drove him away, so that he was obliged to leave his country and travel into strange lands. After some time he came to the city of Elis, in Greece, where at that time, there was a king called Oenomaus who had a lovely daughter named Hippodamia. A great many heroes desired to marry her, and the king had sent to ask the Oracle which of them he should choose for her husband, but the answer that he received was that when his daughter married, he himself would die. He at once determined that his daughter should never marry; and as he had two horses that could run like the wind and there were none in the whole country that could compare with them in speed, he said that anyone who wished to marry his daughter must compete with him in a chariot race, and if he won the race he should have the maiden for his wife, but if he failed to do so he must die. Hippodamia was so beautiful that many heroes were willing to risk their lives for the chance of winning her, and agreed to the conditions. At some distance from the city there stood an altar to Poseidon, which was the goal, and on each occasion the princess drove with the suitor for her hand. Oenomaus used to let them start on in front whilst he remained behind to sacrifice a ram to the gods, and when the sacrifice was offered, he mounted the chariot with his lance in his hand, and urged on the horses to their utmost speed. The race never lasted long, for he very soon overtook the suitor and pierced him through the back with his lance, so that he fell down dead from the chariot.

Thirteen heroes had already lost their lives, and Oenomaus thought that he had found a very good way of preventing his daughter from ever being married. But Pelops heard of the beautiful Hippodamia, and though he heard, too, of the cruel king who put all her suitors to death, he resolved to set out for Elis and try his chance of winning the maiden, for he was a true hero, brave and fearless. It was a prize well worth trying for, for whoever won it would not only have the beautiful princess for his wife, but would also inherit the kingdom, for Oenomaus had no other child. Pelops came to Elis, and Oenomaus told him, as he had told the others, that he must be prepared to race with him, and fixed the race for the following day. The king had outrun many swifter horses than those of Pelops, and if the hero had not set to work cunningly he must have lost his life, but he had thought of a plan by which he might get the better of the king, if he could secure the help of the man to whom was entrusted the care of the horses and chariot of Oenomaus. He watched until this man took the horses to bathe in the river, and he followed him there to have an opportunity of speaking to him privately and promised him a great reward if, on the next day, he would leave out some necessary part of the king's equipment, so that he might be delayed in the race. Oenomaus was such a cruel man that his servants had no affection for him, and the man promised Pelops that he would help him to win the race.

The next day, many people came to the open space outside the city where the race was to be run. They felt sorry for the hero, for his horses were far less

strong and spirited than those of the king, which pawed the ground with impatience, and snuffed the air in their eagerness to set out. Oenomaus told his daughter to get into the chariot with Pelops, and when he had the beautiful maiden sitting by his side, Pelops felt how happy he would be if he could obtain her for his wife, and he urged on his horses with all his might. Meanwhile Oenomaus took a sacrificial knife and killed a ram, and then he laid a part of the flesh in the flame of the fire that burnt on the altar, and prayed to the gods to enable him to get the better of Pelops and kill him. When the sacrifice was ended, he mounted his chariot, with the reins in his left hand and a sharp-pointed lance in his right hand, and the moment he shook the reins, the horses started off at their utmost speed, and the chariot could not be seen for the dust that it raised. He came close to Pelops, and raised his lance to smite him. But the unfaithful servant had taken out the nails which prevent the wheel from slipping off the axle, and just as Oenomaus was overtaking the other chariot, the wheel rolled on one side, and the chariot turned over. The king was thrown out, and he fell upon a stone and was killed instantly.

So Pelops was the victor, and the sentence of the Oracle was fulfilled. As soon as the beautiful Hippodamia had ended her mourning for her father, she was married to Pelops, who became king of Elis and ruled the country well and wisely. Long after his death the Greeks still remembered him, and named the great peninsula in which Elis lies, Peloponnesus, or the Island of Pelops.

XXII.

NIOBE.

NIOBE was the daughter of Tantalus, and the wife of King Amphion, who by means of his singing and playing had built a wall round Thebes.[1] She and her husband were rich and prosperous, but beyond all their other treasures they prized their twelve noble and beautiful children. There were six sons and six daughters, and they were the pride of Niobe's heart. She looked down upon all other women because they were none of them so fortunate as herself, and once she even dared to say that she was superior to the goddess Leto, for that Leto had only two children, and she had six times as many. When Leto heard this she was stung to the quick, and she went weeping to her children and told them of it. These children were the god Apollo and the goddess Artemis, and they were very angry with Niobe for vexing their mother, and resolved to punish her for her pride.

One day the sons of Niobe were in the courtyard wrestling with each other, for they were skilled in wrestling as becomes young heroes, and the mother and

[1] See p. 59.

sisters were standing by, watching them. All at once one of the youths groaned, sank down, and died. He had been hit by one of the arrows of Apollo, which were invisible and deadly, killing instantly whoever was hit by them. The mother, brothers and sisters gathered round the youth, unable to believe that he was dead, when suddenly a maiden sank upon her knees, heaved a sigh, and died also. She had been hit by one of the arrows of Artemis, which were invisible like those of Apollo. Son after son, and daughter after daughter was killed by the unseen arrows, and Niobe knew that this was a punishment for her pride. The youth who was first struck down was not yet cold when the only one of all her children left to Niobe was the youngest daughter, whom she loved best of all. The little girl had always found protection in her mother's lap, and now, when the fear that she must die like her brothers and sisters came over her, she ran to her mother and clung to her knees for shelter. Niobe took her up in her arms, and wrapping her veil round her as if it could shield her from the unseen enemy, she looked up to heaven and cried from her inmost soul, 'Spare me but this one!' But at that moment she felt her daughter convulsed in her arms, and the last of her children was dead.

There was great distress throughout the city. King Amphion tore his hair and threw himself on the earth with frantic cries of grief, and the citizens wept and lamented. But Niobe shed no tears, no word of sorrow came out of her mouth, and she kept her eyes fixed on the ground, still clasping her youngest daughter to her

breast, while the other corpses lay around her. The night came on and the others went into the house, but Niobe remained standing in the starlight amongst her dead children, and when the people came back in the morning, she had turned to stone.

XXIII.

MELEAGER AND ATALANTA.

KING OENEUS lived in the city of Calydon with his wife Althaea, and they had already several children when another little son was born to them. When the child was about seven days old, his mother awoke one night and saw a fire burning on the hearth, and by the fire three women standing, who were taller and statelier than any women she had ever seen before: they were the three Fates, who are the goddesses that decide whether the lives of men shall be brightened by happiness or made heavy with misfortune. One of them said, 'I gift this child with bravery.' The second said, 'I bestow upon him a generous heart.' The third said, 'I grant him life until the day when this firebrand shall be burnt to ashes.' Then they all disappeared, and Althaea, to once got up and took the piece of stick from the fire, and when she had put it out by pouring water upon it, she stowed it away in the chest where she kept her most precious treasures. The parents named their child Meleager, and he grew up to be a strong and noble youth, fond of the chase and of war.

After Meleager had become a man, it happened one year that King Oeneus raised a number of altars of green turf in the fields at harvest-time, and placed on

each altar some of the corn that was first cut, in order to show his gratitude to the gods for having caused the fruits of the earth to grow and ripen; every god and every goddess had an altar except Artemis the goddess of the chase, who was forgotten. She was very angry with the king on account of this, and sent a fierce wild boar to destroy his land. This boar was much larger than any other that had ever been seen, and he had two long pointed tusks which made him very frightful to look at. He roamed about the country, and wherever he found a newly-sown field he tore up the ground and laid it waste, and he ripped open the young trees with his tusks, and broke in among the flocks, killing men and cattle. He was so fierce and powerful that no hunter had courage to attack him, and at last the evil became so serious that the king sent messengers to a number of heroes to ask them to come to Calydon, and all set out together to hunt the boar. All who were summoned promised to come, and at the appointed time they assembled at Calydon. There came also a maiden who was armed with a hunting-spear, and who would not play with the king's daughters, but said she wished to go to the hunt with the heroes.

The maiden's name was Atalanta, and she had a strange history. She was the child of a king and queen who had wished very much to have a little son, and had begged the gods to send them one. Instead of this, however, a girl was born to them, and the father was so angry that he commanded his servants to take the child to a mountain that was clothed with forests, and leave it there to be devoured by wild beasts. For a night and a day the child lay in the forest, and it was

nearly dead of starvation when a she-bear came by, who drooped her head sadly because her little cubs had been taken from her by some hunters. The child was frightened at the great black beast and began to cry, but the bear looked kindly at it, and when she saw what bright eyes the baby had, she growled gently and licked it with her warm tongue. Soon the child forgot its fear, and when the bear put her full udder to its mouth, it began to suck, for it was hungry and thirsty; and from that time the bear came again every day and gave it food and played with it. After some time had passed, it happened that some hunters came up the mountain in pursuit of a deer, and one of them in bending back a bush caught sight of the beautiful little girl, who was lying on the grass playing with flowers. He took her up and called to the other hunters to come and look at her, and they were so delighted at finding her that they let the deer escape. One of them carried her home in his arms, and they were as well satisfied as if they had had a most successful hunt. The house where the hunters lived was in the midst of the green-wood, and they made a soft bed for the child, and fed her with sweet milk. At first she cried continually, for she missed her bear sadly, but the hunters played with her and were so kind to her that she soon became happy again. The hunters named her Atalanta, and when she grew bigger, they took her with them when they went out hunting. Atalanta enjoyed roaming through the woods and running after the wild animals more than anything else, and she let the hunters have no peace till they gave her a spear of her own. Her feet became swift and

her arms strong, and she killed many animals and was a very skilful huntress, but whenever a she-bear came across her path she took great care to do her no harm. She was taller and stronger than other maidens, and at the same time very beautiful. When she heard of the hunt that King Oeneus had proclaimed, she at once set out for Calydon, expecting greatly to enjoy the dangerous chase.

King Oeneus entertained the heroes for nine days, and they amused themselves with feasts and all kinds of games. The tenth day was fixed for the hunt, and it was agreed that whoever should kill the boar was to receive the skin and the head as the prize of honour. There were present, however, some brothers of Queen Althæa who were ill-mannered and discourteous, and who said that Atalanta should not go with them, for that it would be a disgrace to them all their lives if they went out hunting with a woman; but Meleager had conceived a great love for Atalanta, and would not allow her to be excluded. So she set out with the others for the forest where the boar had his lair. They were attended by their servants, who roused the wild beast by making a great clapping with their hands, and drove him out into an open space in the middle of the forest, while the heroes stood round among the trees. At first he remained in the middle of the open space tearing up the earth with his tusks, his eyes burning like fire and his bristles standing up straight from his back, and grunting so frightfully that the heart of many a brave hero beat, and that not altogether for joy. But when the heroes hurled their spears at him, the boar rushed to where the first spear came

from and ripped open the body of the hero with his tusks, so that he was soon lying dead in a pool of his own blood. After this he spied another hero, and with him it fared no better than with the first. Then another hero aimed at him, but he shot too high, and the spear hit one of his friends and pierced him through; so three lives were already sacrificed, and yet the boar had not lost a drop of blood. It was now the turn of Atalanta to throw her spear, and she hit the wild boar in the back causing the blood to gush out; then someone else hit him in the eye, and at last the spear of Meleager pierced his side at a vital spot and inflicted a mortal wound. He could no longer stand up, and was obliged to vent his fury on the innocent earth, and after rolling about in great pain for a little while, he died.

The heroes cut off his head, and severed his skin from his body and gave it to Meleager as the prize of honour, because it was he who had given the wild boar his death-wound. But Meleager said, 'Atalanta was the first to hit the beast,' and he presented her with the prize as a token of love and regard. The skin made in truth a splendid mantle, reaching from the maiden's shoulder right down to her feet, and as she stood in the forest, radiant with beauty, with the skin thrown over her left shoulder, and with the bleeding head in one hand' while in the other she held her hunting-spear, she looked like the goddess Artemis returning from the chase. But the brothers of Queen Althaea who had wished to prevent Atalanta from going out hunting with them, were greatly annoyed, and they spoke rudely to her and snatched away the prize from her. This made Meleager very angry, and a violent quarrel

took place, in which Meleager drew his sword and slew his uncles: he was quickly roused to anger, and they had provoked him beyond his power of endurance, but as soon as they were dead he felt very sorry for his mother's sake, for he knew that she was very fond of her brothers, unmannerly fellows though they were. The servants made biers out of green branches and laid the dead men upon them, and they all, both heroes and servants, went back together into the city.

But a man who had taken the part of the two brothers went on in front to the palace and told the queen that her brothers had been murdered by Meleager. Then the queen's sorrow passed all bounds, and she wept and tore her hair. It was the custom at that time, that if a man was murdered his relations should avenge his death upon the murderer, as this was considered a way of doing honour to his memory, and in the first burst of her resentment she fetched the piece of stick on which the life of Meleager depended, and threw it into a fire that happened to be burning on the hearth. The flames gradually consumed it, and as the last spark went out, Meleager, who was on his way home with the other heroes, fell down dead. By the time the queen heard that her son was dead however, her anger had already passed away, and she was filled with unspeakable remorse for having cut short his life. She did not weep as she had done before, but she felt that she could not bear to live any longer, and she went into her bed-chamber and hanged herself. When this was known, everyone was deeply grieved; the old king would not leave his room, and for a long time refused to eat or drink, and the heroes

dispersed to their homes without caring to stay for the hunting feast.

Atalanta went back to her forest leaving the skin of the boar behind her, for she would have had no pleasure in keeping what would always have reminded her of the death of Meleager. She roamed about the forest as before from morning till night, and was never so happy as when she was among the green trees. Now the fame of her beauty had spread far and wide, and many suitors came to ask her to marry them. But she did not wish to marry, and as her suitors would not leave off pressing her, she said that anyone who liked might race with her, and if he beat her he should be her husband, but if she overtook him he must die. Many of her lovers lost their lives in this manner, for though Atalanta always gave a good start, she very soon overtook her competitor and stabbed him in the back with her hunting-spear.

After a time, however, a man named Milanion resolved to try his chance, who was beloved by the goddess Aphrodite on account of his great beauty, and as she was unwilling that he should lose his life like the others, she gave him three golden apples and told him how to make use of them. He hid them in the folds of his dress, and as soon as he heard Atalanta coming up behind him, he took out one of the apples and threw it down on the ground where it glittered so beautifully in the sunshine that Atalanta could not resist stooping to pick it up. Milanion thus gained a minute, and the next time he found that she was close behind him he threw down the second apple, and again Atalanta allowed him to escape while she stopped for

it. A third time the same thing happened when they were at a very short distance from the goal, and thus Milanion reached it first and won the race, and Atalanta became his wife and went home with him. And he was such a noble hero that she never repented of having allowed herself to be conquered by the golden apples.

XXIV.

ADMETUS AND ALCESTIS.

Apollo once displeased Zeus by acting against his wishes, and the king of the gods said that for a punishment he must serve a mortal for the space of a year, and that the mortal must not know that he was a god, but treat him just like any other slave. So Apollo entered the service of the young king Admetus, who made him the keeper of his flocks. Admetus was a good master, and Apollo found himself well-treated, and he repaid the kindness he received by making the flocks prosper and increase till there were none like them in the whole country. Admetus had never had such a good herdsman, and he treated him even better than his other servants. When the year had passed, Apollo told him who he was, and said that if ever Admetus was in need and prayed to him, he would come and help him. Then Apollo went back to Olympus, and Admetus had another herdsman, but Apollo still blessed the flocks, so that they continued to prosper.

Time passed by and Admetus wished to marry, and he travelled through the country seeking for the fairest and noblest woman in the land to be his wife. He heard that no one could compare with Alcestis, the

daughter of King Pelias, and he went to her father and asked to be allowed to marry her. But the king said that his daughter was not to be won so easily, and that whoever wanted her for his wife must come and sue for her in a chariot drawn by a lion and a wild boar. Admetus was a brave hero and a skilled huntsman, but his heart sank when he heard this, for he feared he should never be able to procure such a team as this, and tame them for his service Then he remembered how Apollo had promised to help him in the time of need, and he prayed to him, and Apollo came and asked what he wanted. When he had been told what it was, he went into the forest with Admetus, and gave chase to a lion whom he caught and held fast by the mane, although the lion roared horribly and tried to snap at him with his great jaws. Presently he spied a boar and pursued him also, making the lion run by his side; and when he had caught the boar, he grasped him by the ear and dragged him along too, so that he had the lion on one side of him and the boar on the other. The wild animals looked at each other angrily and tried to bite one another, but Apollo would not let them do so. He brought them out of the forest and harnessed them to a magnificent chariot, and he had a goad with which he pricked them whenever they tried to hurt one another, until at last they were tame and obedient to the rein. Admetus however would not have been able to keep them under control, so Apollo drove them himself, and thus Admetus arrived at the palace of King Pelias with the god for his charioteer, and with the team that the king had required, and a second time asked for his daughter's

hand in marriage. The king could no longer refuse, and when he had promised that Admetus should have the beautiful Alcestis for his wife, Apollo drove back into the forest and released the two wild animals. Soon afterwards the wedding was celebrated in the palace with great magnificence, and Apollo was one of the guests. As a wedding-present, he brought a promise from the goddesses of Fate, that if ever Admetus were sick and in danger of death and one of his nearest relations would consent to die instead of him, the life thus offered would be accepted instead of the life of Admetus, and he would become well again.

Admetus and Alcestis loved each other dearly, and lived happily together for many years. But after some time had passed, Admetus was smitten with a sore sickness, and everyone said that he must die unless his life could be saved according to the promise of Apollo. The people thought that as his father and mother were now very old and could not hope to live much longer in any case, they would be willing to die instead of Admetus; but they loved life more than they loved their son, and would not part with it until they were obliged. Then the beautiful Alcestis went into her chamber and prayed to the gods that they would allow her to give up her life to save her husband, and when she had ended her prayer, she lay down on the bed and died. At the same moment Admetus became suddenly well, and was able to stand up and walk about. He did not know how it was that he had been so quickly cured until he went into the chamber of Alcestis, and saw her lying dead upon the couch; then he understood how it was, but he felt that

he would much rather have died himself. All through the palace there was loud lamentation, for all the household loved Alcestis dearly because she was so good and kind to them. Admetus would not leave her couch, but sat beside it holding her cold hand, which was ever wet with his tears. Night came on, and morning dawned again, but he gave no heed to it, and the corpse had already become quite cold—when suddenly it began to grow warm again, and presently Alcestis heaved a deep sigh, opened her eyes, and was once more alive.

Never before had such a wonder taken place, and this was how it came to pass. When Alcestis died, her shade passed into the Lower World, and the Shadow-Leader, who conducted the dead thither, told the queen of the Lower World the reason of her death. So many shadows came into their dominions who had had a sad end, that the gods of the Lower World had at last exhausted all their pity, and ceased to weep for them. But when the queen heard how Alcestis had died in the full bloom of her youth and beauty in order that Admetus might live, she was deeply moved, and commanded the Shadow-Leader to take her back to the Upper World and restore her to life.

So Alcestis awoke to life again, and she lived with her husband in happiness and prosperity for many years after this; gods and men united to do them honour, and when they had reached a good old age, they both died at the same time.

XXV.

PERSEUS.

THERE was once a king of Argos called Acrisius, who had an only daughter. Her name was Danaë and she was very beautiful, but the Oracle said that she would have a son through whom Acrisius would lose his life. This frightened Acrisius very much, and he had a large brazen room made for Danaë to live in under the earth, where she had everything she wished for, but she was never allowed to see the light of day, nor any man. Her father thought he would thus be able to prevent her from marrying secretly and having a son, and for a time everything went on according to his wishes. But Zeus, the king of the gods, loved Danaë, and he one day changed himself into a beautiful golden shower of rain, whose shining drops fell down through the brazen roof. Thus Zeus was married to Danaë, and not long afterwards she had a son. Acrisius was very angry, and he had the mother and son shut up in a wooden chest and cast into the sea.

The chest was tossed about on the waves, and floated far away. On the third day it reached an island where there happened to be a man on the shore fishing, who was the brother of the king of the island. He drew the chest to land and forced open the lid, and when he

saw the lovely woman and her child inside it, he took them, just as they were, into the house to show them to the king his brother, who promised to protect them and treat them kindly. Acrisius thought they had perished in the sea, but they were safe on the island, and Danaë was quite happy in taking care of her son, whom she named Perseus. In the course of time, Perseus grew up to be a young man, and he was beautiful and brave and strong.

The king of the island wanted to have Danaë for his wife, but she did not wish to marry him. Then the king thought that if it were not for Perseus he might compel her to do so, and he sought to find some excuse for sending Perseus away on a far journey. So one day he called his friends together, and Perseus among the rest. He told them that he was going to sue for a bride, and that he wished each of them to bring him some present to offer to her father; for it was the custom in those days that anyone who wanted to win a bride should give costly presents to the father of the lady he wished to marry. They all agreed to do as the king desired, and he asked most of his friends to give him splendid horses, but from Perseus he demanded a gift that would involve a difficult and dangerous journey to a distant land. At the far end of the world there lived three sisters called Gorgons, who instantly turned to stone everyone that looked at them; the only one of the three who was mortal was called Medusa, and the king commanded Perseus to bring him her head, hoping that he would perish in the attempt.

Perseus had no fear, and at once set out in quest of the Gorgon's head. There were three nymphs who

had three precious things without which it would have been useless for him to try and obtain it, but no one knew where these nymphs lived except the three Grey Sisters, who lived far away from any inhabited land, and would never reveal the secret of where the nymphs were to be found unless they were compelled to do so. They were the sisters of the Gorgons, and had been quite grey ever since their birth, and they had only one tooth and one eye between them, which they used in turns. Perseus went to the cavern where the Grey Sisters lived, and watched till one of them took out the eye and the tooth to pass them to her sister, when he sprang forward and snatched them out of her hand, and said that he would not give them back till they told him where the nymphs lived. So they were obliged to tell him, and then he gave them back their eye and tooth, and went on to the nymphs who were kind to him and gave him the three precious things. These were,—first, a pouch in which to place the head of Medusa after he had cut it off; secondly, a pair of sandals which enabled anyone who put them on to fly through the air; and, thirdly the helmet of Pluto, which made whoever wore it invisible. The gods loved Perseus because he was so brave, and Hermes came down to earth and gave him a sickle of very sharp steel with which to cut off the head of the Gorgon. Perseus put on the sandals, and taking the other things with him, he flew to the great stream Oceanus which flows round the world. There was a rocky island in the middle of the stream covered with rank weeds and full of serpents, and here the Gorgons lived in a cave. When Perseus reached them it was about noonday, and

they were asleep. They were larger than mortal women, and had great teeth like tusks and brazen hands and golden wings, and they had live snakes twined among their hair, and everyone who looked at them was turned to stone. Perseus heard them snoring, and he went into the cave on tip-toe so as not to wake them. He was obliged to go backwards, for if he had looked at them he would have been turned to stone; but he had a polished shield which he held up before him as a mirror, and he could see them in the mirror without being harmed. They had stretched themselves out in a row, and lay asleep leaning one against the other; Medusa was smaller than the others, and by this he was able to recognise her. Her head was resting on a stone, and Perseus held up the shield before her and cut through her neck with the sickle till the head fell off, and then he took it up, put it into the pouch without looking at it, and flew away. But the bleeding trunk still palpitated, and the other two Gorgons awoke and saw it, and they darted out of the cavern after Perseus, that they might seize him and tear him to pieces with their iron claws. They flew through the air looking for him, and they had sharp eyes with which they could see to a great distance, but they could not find Perseus because he had on the helmet of Pluto which made him invisible, and were obliged to return without him. Perseus was meanwhile on his way home with the dead head in his pouch.

After some days he came to a country in Africa, where there was a king whose name was Cepheus. The queen was called Cassiopëä, and she was very beautiful

and very proud of her beauty, and every day she went down to the sea that she might have the pleasure of looking at her picture in the water. One day she said that she was more beautiful than the sea-nymphs, and the nymphs heard it and were so angry with her that they begged Poseidon, the sea-god, to punish her for her pride. Then Poseidon created a huge monster which came up every day out of the sea and wasted the land, devouring men and cattle, so that there was great distress among the people. They asked the Oracle what they should do, and the Oracle said that they must give the king's daughter to the monster to devour, and then he would not come again any more. The king's daughter was called Andromeda, and she was beautiful like her mother, but she was not vain of her beauty, and the king and queen loved her very dearly. She was their only child, and they cherished her as their most precious treasure, and refused to give her up to be food for the horrible monster. But at last they were obliged to consent to this, and the day came when Andromeda was to be taken to a rock in the sea and bound fast with iron chains, so that she could not run away when the monster came to devour her. The king and queen wept bitterly, and many people followed them to the shore, weeping also.

They had just reached the rock when Perseus also approached it, and he took the helmet off his head so that he could be seen, and asked why the beautiful princess was to be chained to it. They told him all about it, and he said that if they would promise to let him have Andromeda for his wife, he would undertake to kill the monster and deliver her. The king had

already promised Andromeda in marriage to a brother of his named Phineus, but though she was in such great peril, Phineus did not trouble himself much about it, and had no intention of risking his life for her. Perseus, however, felt very differently; he longed to have her for his wife, and the parents promised him that if he slew the monster he should be their son-in-law. Soon afterwards the monster appeared, rising up from the bottom of the sea, and making great waves as he swam along. Perseus waited till he came near the shore, and then flew down and struck him a mighty blow on the neck with his sword. The monster snapped at him with his great jaws, but Perseus had already flown up high above him, and before the monster could look round he had received another wound, and he lashed his tail in fury till the water was quite red with his blood, but he could not reach Perseus who flew round him and struck him again and again, till at last he bled to death.

Then there was great joy among the people: the chains were taken off from Andromeda, and the king and queen kissed her, feeling as if she had been raised from the dead. They went back into the city, and Perseus walked by the side of Andromeda who liked well the appearance of the brave and noble hero. On the seventh day the marriage took place, and they offered sacrifices, and danced and sang and feasted. Phineus however was not there, but in the middle of the marriage feast he came into the hall of the palace at the head of a large band of armed servants, and said that he would kill Perseus and all who sided with him, for that Andromeda had been promised to him, and

ought to be his wife. Then a struggle took place in the hall, and Perseus slew several of the servants, but they were twenty to one, and it was no fair fight. At last Perseus cried out with a loud voice, 'Let all who are on my side turn away their faces,' and then he thrust his hand into the pouch, drew forth the head of Medusa, and held it out towards Phineus and his servants, and in a moment they were all turned to stone.

The king gave Perseus a beautiful ship, in which he sailed with Andromeda to the island where his mother was. He found her in sore distress, for the king of the island had tried to compel her to marry him, and she had fled for refuge to the altar. Those who took refuge at an altar were under the protection of the gods as long as they remained there, and no one dared to touch them; but the king commanded that no one should bring Danaë anything to eat, and he placed watchmen all round to see that his orders were obeyed, for he thought that when she was absolutely starving she would be compelled to leave the altar, and then he would be able to seize her and make her his wife. But at this moment Perseus arrived at the island in his ship, and when he heard where his mother was, he went to her, and she told him everything, which made him very angry. The treacherous king heard that Perseus had come back, and he was afraid, and summoned his servants to go with him to the altar to kill Perseus. Then Perseus again drew forth the head of Medusa and turned them all to stone, and he gave the kingdom to the king's brother, who had always been kind to Danaë.

Danaë had a great love for her father, although he had thrust her away from him, and as Perseus also wished very much to see his grandfather, they determined to pay him a visit, and they sailed with Andromeda to Argos in the ship that Cepheus had given them. But when the old Acrisius heard that his daughter and her son were coming, he was afraid, for he remembered what the Oracle had said, and he left the country, telling no one where he was going; so that when the ship reached Argos, Acrisius was not there. And as it happened that a rich king had lately died, and that games were to be celebrated in his honour, Perseus thought he would go and take part in these games, for anyone could go that liked, and those who did best would receive prizes by which their names would become known and honoured throughout Greece. Acrisius also went to the games, for he wanted to see what was going on, and he thought that there he would surely be safe from his grandson. No one knew who Perseus was, but he excelled all others and won the best prizes. One of the things they did was to try who could throw farthest a plate of stone called a discus. Perseus was just going to take his turn at throwing the discus, when it slipped out of his hand, and flying sideways, hit the old Acrisius on the head and killed him. Thus it happened that Acrisius was running to meet his fate at the very moment when he thought he was escaping from it. Perseus was very sorrowful when he heard that it was his grandfather, the king of Argos, whom he had killed accidentally, and he had the corpse brought to Argos and buried with great magnificence. The kingdom of Argos was now his, but he could never

forget that he had killed his grandfather, and this made the country so distasteful to him that he was glad to exchange with another king who ruled over the cities of Mycenae and Tiryns.

Perseus gave the three precious things by means of which he had obtained the head of Medusa, to Hermes, to be returned to the nymphs, and the Gorgon's head he presented to the goddess Athene, who fastened it to her shield. He lived honoured and esteemed to the end of his days, and his wife Andromeda bore him many beautiful children.

XXVI.

HERACLES.

1. *The War with the Teleboae.*

PERSEUS had been dead a long time, and his son Electryon who succeeded him as king was already an old man, when a dispute arose between him and a nephew of his named Pterelaus. Pterelaus was king of the Teleboae, who lived on several islands, and he maintained that he had a better right to the cities of Mycenae and Tiryns than Electryon, because he was descended from the eldest son of Perseus; and one day he sent his sons, and many of the Teleboae with them, in ships to Mycenae, and told them to say to Electryon that he must be prepared to give up the kingdom to him. Electryon was very angry, and sent the Teleboae away without paying any attention to their message. They left the city, but on their way back to their ships they came upon the king's droves of cattle which were tended by his sons and servants, and they began to fight with them, and the fight did not stop till all the sons of Electryon were killed but one, and also all the sons of Pterelaus except one, who had remained behind with the ships and had taken no part in the fight. The Teleboae had however got rather the best

of it, and those of them who were left drove the cattle to their ships and sailed away. Some time afterwards it happened that Electryon got back his cattle, for the Teleboae had given them as a present to a king who paid them to him for ransom; but the cattle could not make up for the loss of his sons for whom he grieved bitterly, and he determined to be revenged on Pterelaus and told his servants to prepare to start with him for the islands of the Teleboae.

There was at that time at Mycenae a young hero named Amphitryon, who had come to ask for the hand of Electryon's daughter Alcmene in marriage, and it was arranged that he should have charge of the kingdom during the absence of Electryon. But one day, just before the king was to start on his expedition, it happened that he was overlooking his flocks with Amphitryon, when the young hero threw his stick at a cow that was leaving the herd, and the stick bounded back by accident from the cow's horns and hit the aged Electryon on the head, so that he was killed instantly. Amphitryon was obliged to leave the kingdom on account of this unintentional murder, and he went to Thebes, where King Creon purged him from the stain of blood by means of numerous sacrifices. During his absence, however, a brother of Electryon, named Sthenelus, contrived to gain possession of the kingdom for himself, and to banish the two children of Electryon,—his daughter Alcmene, and the one son who had not been killed by the Teleboae. They were obliged to give way to Sthenelus, who was stronger than they, and came to live in Thebes where Amphitryon was, but Alcmene said that though she loved him she would never marry

him till he had avenged the murder of her brothers. Amphitryon accordingly prepared to march against the Teleboae, and sought to find brave heroes who would consent to go with him.

He first of all asked King Creon for his help, but Creon was just then in great trouble at home, for a fox had for some time taken up his abode in the fortress Cadmea, and had devoured numbers of people; he was under the protection of the gods, and it had been decreed by the Fates that he should never be caught. So the Thebans, finding that they could not get rid of him, had made a truce with him by which they agreed to give him a boy every month to devour, and on this condition he spared the rest of the people. Creon therefore promised to go with Amphitryon if he would first help him to deliver the country from the terrible fox. Now Amphitryon had heard that there was a wonderful dog in Athens which was also under the protection of the gods, and that it had been decreed that nothing that he pursued could ever escape him; so he went to the hero who owned the dog, and promised him a share of the spoil which he hoped to bring back from the islands of the Teleboae if he would lend him the dog for a time, and the hero agreed to do so. Amphitryon took the dog back to Thebes and set out with him in pursuit of the fox, and the dog ran after him as fast as lightning. The Thebans thought that now one or other of the prophecies must prove false; either the fox who was never to be caught would be overtaken, or the dog who was never to pursue in vain would be baffled. But when the dog had got so close to the fox that he was on the point of snapping at him, they both

remained motionless, and the Thebans saw that they had been turned to stone.

Then Creon said that he was quite willing to accompany Amphitryon, and the hero of Athens agreed to go also, and many other heroes, and they all embarked for the islands of the Teleboae, but they could not conquer King Pterelaus, for he had many soldiers and knew well the art of war. The daughter of Pterelaus, however, had seen Amphitryon from the city walls and had conceived a great love for him which made her secretly sorry when the Teleboae conquered, and glad when one day they were the losers; and she resolved to betray her father and her fellow-citizens into the hands of Amphitryon, because she thought that if she helped him to gain the victory, he would feel grateful to her and would make her his wife. Now Pterelaus was immortal through the good-will of Poseidon, who had given him a golden hair which he kept carefully hidden away under his grey locks, for it had the power of keeping him alive. But one day while he was asleep, his daughter came in on tiptoe, sought for the golden hair and pulled it out,—and immediately his breath stopped short, and Pterelaus was dead.

The Teleboae could no longer resist their enemies now that they were deprived of the advice of their wise king, and in a short time Amphitryon had gained possession of the chief town and of all the islands, and had avenged upon the Teleboae the slaughter of the sons of Electryon. The daughter of Pterelaus thought that she would now be the wife of Amphitryon, but things turned out very differently from her expectations, for as soon as Amphitryon saw her, he drew his sword and

stabbed her; he knew that she had killed her father, but he did not know why she had done so. Then the heroes carried the booty to their ships and sailed away home.

2. *The Birth and Youth of Heracles.*

Alcmene was so very beautiful that Zeus, the king of the gods, loved her, and when Amphitryon was far away with the other heroes, Zeus took his form and went to Alcmene. He acted and spoke just like Amphitryon, and told her all about the battles and how they had won the victory, and he even showed her the helmets and shields of the Teleboae, for he had made Hermes, the messenger of the gods, steal them from the booty of Amphitryon. Alcmene had no suspicion that it was any other than her lover who had come back after fulfilling her wishes with regard to the Teleboae. and she promised to marry him that very day; and Zeus kissed her and became her husband. Some time after this, Amphitryon returned to Thebes and was very much astonished when Alcmene told him that she had already been married to him. They could not understand it, and asked the seer Tiresias what it meant. He told them that it was Zeus in the form of Amphitryon who had been with Alcmene, and the Theban women thought it was a great honour for her to have been married for a time to the king of the gods. The wedding was now celebrated over again, and all the heroes who had been to the war with the Teleboae feasted with Amphitryon and Alcmene till far into the night. Some time afterwards, Alcmene had two children whom she named Heracles and Iphicles;

one was the son of Zeus, and the other the son of Amphitryon. There was no difficulty in knowing which was the child of the god, for Heracles was far bigger than such young children usually are. Gods and men took pleasure in the fine strong child, all but the goddess Hera, who hated him, and even before his birth began to do all she could to injure him. Zeus had decreed that the next child born of the race of Perseus should rule over the cities of Mycenae and Tiryns, thinking that this would be Heracles, for Alcmene was the granddaughter of Perseus; but Hera persuaded the goddesses who arranged about the birth of children to let a son of Sthenelus, Alcmene's uncle, be born first. His father named him Eurystheus, and as he had been born before Heracles, he became king of the two cities of Mycenae and Tiryns after the death of Sthenelus.

Heracles was about eight months old, when one morning, just as it was beginning to grow light, Hera sent two great snakes into the room where he was sleeping, near the bed of Alcmene, in one of the shields which Amphitryon had brought back from the country of the Teleboae as part of the spoil. The snakes crept into the shield and began to twine themselves round the child. Just then Alcmene woke, and she jumped up and ran to call the people of the house to kill the snakes, though she was afraid it was even then too late, and that the child must have already been crushed to death by them. But when she came back with the others, she saw Heracles sitting up in the shield and holding one of the snakes in each hand; he had seized them each by the neck, and was squeezing them so tight that their tongues were hanging out, and very

soon they were dead. Then he threw them away and went to sleep again; and the Thebans knew that a mighty hero had been born in their city.

When Heracles grew older, he learned all the things that heroes need to know,—how to guide the war-chariot, how to use the spear and bow, and how to fight with the fist and the sword. He was taught all this by the noblest heroes, and also by a Centaur named Chiron, who, like all the Centaurs, had a curious form — half of their body was that of a man, and the other half that of a horse. Chiron had been specially gifted with immortality, and he was very wise, and taught Heracles many things, especially how to know the stars, and how to heal wounds, and he told him stories of the gods and of the old heroes.

Heracles could easily be distinguished from all other men, for when he was eighteen years old he measured eight feet in height, and he had marvellous strength, and his eyes glittered like coals of fire. He had moreover a generous nature, and was always ready to help all true and good men. Amphitryon made him keeper of his flocks which pastured on Mount Cithaeron, and never before had such a lordly herdsman been seen. It happened once that a lion took up his abode on the mountain, and broke in among the flocks, and Heracles thought to himself, 'If I were to kill the lion, my flocks would not only be able to feed in safety, but I should also get a handsome skin to dress myself in.' So he set out for the mountain-passes where the lion had his lair, armed with nothing but a strong stick and a knife. When he came to the lion's cave, the huge beast sprang out upon him, but Heracles gave him a

good blow on the nose which made him stagger back, and when he had nearly beaten him to death with his stick, he finally gave him a mortal blow with the knife. Then he sat down quietly, and cut open the body of the lion and took off the skin, which he put on as a cloak as soon as it was dry. The jaws covered his head like a helmet, while the rest of the skin fell from his shoulders to his knees, and he twisted the fore-feet into a knot over his chest in order to prevent the wind from blowing it off. In this fashion he came down from the mountain, and anyone who had seen him from behind would have thought that a lion had grown out of his shoulders. It never occurred to him, however, that he had done anything out of the way in killing the lion.

Some time afterwards, there came along the road some men who had been sent by Erginus, the king of the powerful Minyae, to demand tribute from the Thebans. Ten years before this a Theban had thrown a stone at the father of Erginus and hit him on the head, so that he was carried home dying. Before he expired he charged his son to avenge his blood, and Erginus made war upon the Thebans and killed a number of them. He had also made them give him a hundred cows every year for the last nine years, and the messengers were now on their way to fetch the tribute for the tenth time. Heracles asked them who they were and where they were going, and when he heard that they were the messengers of the Minyae, his blood boiled so that he grew quite red in the face, for it angered him to think that the city of Thebes, to which he himself belonged, should pay tribute to a foreign

king. He told the messengers to return and never come again, and when they refused to obey, he threw them on the ground, notwithstanding their numbers, and tied their hands behind their backs; then he cut off their ears and noses, and told them to take these to the king for tribute. Thus outraged, the messengers returned and entreated the king to avenge them, and Erginus swore that he would not leave a man alive in Thebes, nor one stone upon another. But Heracles went to Thebes and called the citizens to arms, saying that he would be their leader. The gods equipped him right gloriously for the fight: Hermes gave him a sword, Apollo a bow and arrows, Hephaestus trappings of pure gold, and Athene a coat of mail. But a sword was too light and delicate a weapon for the powerful hand of Heracles, so he went out into the forest and tore up a stout young oaktree, which he trimmed and used as a club. When the battle began, Heracles looked, in comparison with the Minyae, like a lion among a flock of sheep. He killed King Erginus and put his army to flight, and obliged the Minyae to give the Thebans two hundred cows every year for the future. King Creon had a beautiful daughter named Megara, and he gave her to Heracles for a wife out of gratitude to him for having conquered the Minyae.

3. *The Madness of Heracles, and his First Six Labours.*

Heracles loved his wife very dearly, and the gods sent them three beautiful children, all of whom were sons. They lived a peaceful and happy life together, Heracles went out hunting and killed wild beasts, and when he

came home he played with his children. But Hera still hated him, and she one day afflicted him with such terrible madness that in his delusion he seized his children and threw them into the fire, so that they perished miserably. When the madness left him he could hardly endure life, so distressed was he at what he had done, and he could not bear to remain in the place where such a misfortune had happened to him. He left Thebes and went, first of all, to a man who knew how to purge him from the stain of blood; then he betook himself to Delphi and asked the Pythia where he must live in the future. The Pythia answered, 'Go to Mycenae and serve King Eurystheus for twelve years; allow him to impose upon you twelve hard Labours, and accomplish these to the best of your power.' Heracles was well pleased with this sentence, and was quite willing to perform the most difficult tasks, even such as would be set him by a deadly enemy like Eurystheus who hated and feared Heracles, thinking that he would some day take away the kingdom from him because it had belonged to his own grandfather Electryon. Heracles went to Mycenae and said to Eurystheus that he would serve him for the space of twelve years, and that during that time he would accomplish any twelve tasks that Eurystheus might choose to set him. The king was very glad to hear this, and he at once commanded Heracles to bring him the skin of the Nemean lion, hoping that he would perish in trying to secure it.

The Nemean lion had his lair near the town of Nemea, and his fame had spread far and wide. He had never bled from a wound, for his skin was so thick that no steel could pierce it. Heracles set out in pursuit of

the lion, and when he had found him, he shot at him with his bow and arrows, but they bounded off as if from the hardest stone. Finding that the arrows were of no use, Heracles then attacked him with his club, but the lion did not care to fight with him and ran away into the thickest part of the forest. Heracles ran after him, and chased him from morning till night. At last he came to a great cave and ran in there. Heracles noticed that the cave had another mouth, and he thought to himself, 'If I were to go in after him, he would still be able to escape.' So he first of all brought stones and blocked up one of the entrances, while the lion, who had never run so far before in one day, lay quietly in the dark inside, tired and frightened, and then he went into the cave and wrestled with him. The roaring of the lion echoed horribly from the walls of the cave, but Heracles was not frightened, and he wound his arm round the neck of the beast and pressed him with all his might against his own body until he died. Heracles could not take off his skin for he had brought no knife with him, so he hoisted the whole lion on to his shoulders, and went back to Mycenae. When he threw the huge beast on to the ground before Eurystheus, the king turned pale for his bad conscience made him afraid, and he thought, 'If he can strangle a lion like this, he would certainly not find it difficult to make an end of me.' So he at once sent him off to perform his second Labour, which was to destroy the Lernean Hydra, and during his absence he had an iron room built under the earth that looked like a cage for wild beasts, for it had a grating of iron bars. This was for

Eurystheus to get into when Heracles came back, in order that he might speak to him through the grating, so terribly afraid was he of the strong man.

Heracles set out in a war chariot, taking with him his young cousin Iolaus as his charioteer, and they soon came to the marshy district near the town of Lerne, where the Hydra lived. The Hydra was a huge snake with one body and nine heads, the centre one of which was immortal. She devoured any men or beasts that came near her, and destroyed the fields of corn. She had her den in a cavern close by a clear running stream, and when Heracles and Iolaus arrived at the place, she was lying stretched out on the ground, for she had just swallowed a few cows. She looked at the heroes with all her staring eyes, but did not move, because she was not hungry. However Heracles did not care to wait, so he threw burning javelins at her, which scorched her skin and made her furious with pain. She crept out of the cavern and glided up a tall oak tree, and all her nine heads shot down venom at Heracles from above him. But Heracles was on the alert; he held his club in his right hand, and twined his left arm round the Hydra just at the place where the ninefold neck grew out of her body, and when she lashed her tail about, he pressed her still more tightly against himself, so that she would have been only too glad to run away if she could. Now the Hydra had formed a friendship with a great lobster, and he, seeing that his friend was in danger, crept up to Heracles and scratched his foot with his claws. But he got decidedly the worst of it, for Heracles smote his shell with his club and broke it into a thousand pieces, so that the

poor lobster died. Then Heracles heaved a mighty blow on one of the Hydra's nine heads and struck it off, but two new heads immediately sprang from the bleeding neck, and every time he smote off a head, two more sprang up to replace it. Heracles now saw that he must set to work in a different manner, so he told Iolaus to set the forest on fire, and to pass a piece of burning wood over each neck as soon as he had cut off the head. In this way all the roots from which the heads grew were burnt away, and Heracles was thus able to kill all the heads that were mortal. The last was immortal, but he hewed it off also, and buried it, and rolled a huge stone on to the top of it. After this, there came a rain which extinguished the burning forest. The gall of the Hydra was the worst poison in the world, so Heracles cut open the Hydra's body and dipped his arrows into the gall, which made them absolutely deadly: if a man were only scratched even, by an arrow poisoned in this way, he must die.

Eurystheus was in his cage when Heracles came back from his conflict with the Hydra, and he commanded him to catch the Ceryneian hind, and bring her alive to Mycenae. This hind was under the protection of Artemis the goddess of the chase, and was very beautiful: her coat was milk-white, and her horns were of the purest gold. She could run so fast that the wind was quite out of breath when he tried to race with her, and, after having run the whole day long, she would skip about quite merrily without being in the least tired. At the command of Eurystheus, Heracles gave chase to her, and they took neither rest nor food, nor did they heed rain or sunshine, but ran on day and

night without stopping for a whole year. At last they came to a river, and while the hind was hesitating whether she should jump into it, Heracles quickly took an unpoisoned arrow and shot at her. The purple-red blood flowed out over her little white coat, and she groaned with pain. She forgot to run away, and Heracles was able to seize her. He had only wounded her slightly with the arrow because he did not want to do her any harm, and now he laid cooling herbs upon the wound, and placing the hind on his shoulder, he carried her to Mycenae, and as soon as Eurystheus had seen her, he set her free again and let her run back into the forest.

That was the third Labour of Heracles. For the fourth, Eurystheus commanded him to catch the Erymanthian boar alive. This boar lived on Mount Erymanthus, and no huntsman who had tried to kill him had ever come back alive, for the boar had always ripped open his body with his tusks.

On his way to Mount Erymanthus, Heracles came to the country of the Centaurs. They were a savage, unfriendly race, who had no regard for the duties of hospitality; but one of them, named Pholus, was better than the others, and he gave Heracles shelter in his cave. He made a fire and roasted a calf for his guest, but he himself ate raw meat as he was accustomed to do. Heracles enjoyed his meal very much for the long journey had made him hungry, and as he was also thirsty, he asked the Centaur for a draught of wine. Pholus said, 'It is true that I have a great cask of wine in my cave, but it belongs to all the Centaurs in common, and if they knew that you had drunk any of it, they

might kill you.' But Heracles said he was not afraid, so Pholus rolled out the cask and drew some wine from it. But the wine had such a strong odour that the Centaurs smelt it, and they all came to the cavern with clubs and spears to kill Heracles. At first he defended himself with firebrands only, as he did not wish to do more than drive them away, but finding that they would not leave him alone, he seized his bow and shot at them with the poisoned arrows, and everyone who was hit fell down dead. When the others saw that, they took to flight, but Heracles had by this time grown furious, and vowing that he would not leave one of them alive, he pursued them, and they could not escape from his arrows. In their distress they ran to the wise Centaur Chiron who had been the teacher of Heracles, and embraced his knees, entreating him to ask Heracles to have mercy on them. But Heracles would not stop shooting, and only took care not to hit Chiron, and his eye was so true that he could be sure of hitting nothing that he did not aim at. But an arrow went right through the arm of one of the Centaurs who had embraced Chiron's knees, and its point grazed his skin. Heracles was very much distressed, he threw his bow down on the ground, and ran to get herbs that heal poisonous wounds. But no herb had any power to heal the Hydra's poison, and Chiron suffered horrible torture, so that his immortality was a burden to him. Then he prayed to Zeus to take away his immortality, and Zeus heard him and allowed him to die. But Heracles did not stay with him till his death, for he was now more angry with the Centaurs than ever, and he ran after them and overtook them. They would all

have perished if Poseidon had not had pity on them and caused a wall of granite to spring up suddenly out of the earth round the Centaurs to protect them from him. Then Heracles was obliged to leave them, and he turned back and went on his way with a heavy heart, full of sad thoughts about Chiron. As soon as he was out of sight, the wall sank back into the earth, and the Centaurs were able to go home in peace.

When Heracles reached the foot of Mount Erymanthus he prepared a noose in which to catch the wild boar, and soon afterwards he saw him sharpening his tusks against an oak tree. Heracles raised a cry which made the whole forest echo, and the strong boar took to flight. It was winter, and the upper part of the mountain was covered with deep snow. Heracles chased the boar up the mountain till he had driven him into a snow-field, through which the wild beast plodded panting, till he was quite tired out and could go no further, and then Heracles slipped the noose over his neck and secured him. Then he tied his feet together and threw him, feet uppermost, over his left shoulder, putting his arm round his neck to prevent him from using his tusks, and in this manner he journeyed back to Mycenae. Most men would not have thought it very cheerful work to travel with such a companion, but Heracles was not at all concerned; on the contrary, it was the boar who was trembling. Heracles showed the boar to Eurystheus through the grating, and then killed him.

Heracles now set out to perform his fifth Labour, and this time his task was to cleanse the stables of Augeas in a single day. Augeas was a rich king of

Elis, who had three thousand cattle. At night the cattle always stood in a great court surrounded with walls, close to the king's palace, and as it was quite ten years since the servants had cleaned it out, there was enough refuse in the court to build up a high mountain. Heracles went to Augeas and asked if he would give him the tenth part of his flocks if he thoroughly cleansed his stables in a single day. The king looked upon this as such an absolutely impossible feat that he would not have minded promising his kingdom as a reward for it, so he laughed and said, 'Set to work, we shall not quarrel about the wages,' and he further promised distinctly to give Heracles what he asked, and this he did in the presence of Phyleus, his eldest son, who happened to be there. The next morning Heracles set to work, but even his strong arms would have failed to accomplish the task if they had not been aided by his mother-wit. He compelled a mighty torrent to work for him, but you would hardly guess how he did it. First he opened great gates on two opposite sides of the court, and then he went to the stream, and when he had blocked up its regular course with great stones, he conducted it to the court that required to be cleansed, so that the water streamed in at one end and streamed out at the other, carrying away all the dirt with it. Before evening the stream had done its work and was restored to its usual course.

But when Heracles demanded his reward, Augeas denied that he had promised it. However he said that he would summon a court of justice and would abide by its decision, for he thought to himself, 'The only one who heard me make the promise is my son, and he

will not witness against me.' A number of wise old men were accordingly summoned to the palace to be judges, and Phyleus was called upon to witness. But Phyleus cared more for justice than for his father's advantage, and he said that Augeas had promised the tenth part of his flocks to Heracles as a reward for cleansing the stables. Then Augeas grew furious, and would not allow the judges to pronounce the sentence, but banished both Heracles and Phyleus from the country, threatening that if ever they were caught in his kingdom they would forfeit their lives. Heracles went away without his reward, but he promised himself that when the twelve Labours were accomplished, he would come back and punish the king for his faithlessness.

Again Heracles set out at the command of Eurystheus, and this time he had to drive away the Stymphalian birds,—this was his sixth Labour. Near the city of Stymphalus, in the land of Arcadia, there was a great lake, whose shores were covered with very dense forests where countless birds had built their nests. These birds were as large as cranes, and very thievish, and there was such a number of them that if they had all flown out at once and assembled above the water, it would have been pitch-dark all over the great lake. Heracles went to the edge of the lake and listened to the noise that the birds made, but he could not get at them, for they kept themselves hidden among the thick boughs where no arrow could reach them. Heracles could not think of any means of chasing them from among the trees, and was almost in despair, when the goddess Athene, who loved all good and brave men,

came to his assistance. She gave him a great iron rattle that Hephaestus had made, and when Heracles shook it, it made such a fearful noise that all the birds flew out screaming. Then Heracles shot arrow after arrow among them; a great many of them fell dead into the lake, and the rest were so much frightened that they flew far away and never came back again.

4. *The Last Six Labours.*

The seventh Labour that Eurystheus imposed upon Heracles was to bring the Cretan bull to Mycenae. In the island of Crete lived King Minos, who was very wise, and who was allowed to hold intercourse with the gods. One day, when the Cretans were on the sea-shore offering sacrifices to Poseidon, the king prayed that Poseidon would send him a bull out of the sea for sacrifice, for he wanted to show the Cretans what great regard the gods had for him. Immediately there came, borne to the shore upon the swelling waves, a most beautiful bull, and Minos was so fascinated by its beauty that he did not keep his word, but sacrificed another bull and put the one that came out of the sea among his flocks. Poseidon punished him by making the bull mad; he killed the herdsmen and escaped into the forest, and did so much damage that the king repented of having broken his word. When Heracles came to him and said that he wanted to catch the bull, Minos gladly supplied him with ropes and spears, for he would not have minded paying a heavy price in order to get the plague removed from the country. Heracles went into the forest and soon found his way to the bull,

for he was guided to him by the bellowing he made. When he came near, he threw a spear at him in order to irritate him. The bull ran at him furiously, lowering his horns to toss him into the air, but Heracles waited quietly till he came up, and then he seized his horns and held them fast, so that the bull could not raise his head again. They went on for some time pulling at each other, and the bull dragged Heracles about from place to place, bellowing horribly all the time. He was a huge powerful animal, but he could not get his horns free, and only tired himself to no purpose. At last he was quite exhausted, and Heracles made a halter out of the rope he had brought with him and wound it round his neck, and the bull followed him quite quietly. The Cretans ran together to look at the strong man leading the fierce bull, and were astonished to see the bull walking so quietly by his side. Heracles got into his ship and sailed back to Mycenae with the bull, and when he had led him through the city, he let him go free. You will hear more of him again by-and-by.[1]

The eighth Labour of Heracles was that of procuring the horses of Diomedes. Diomedes was a king of Thrace, a savage and cruel man, who cared for nothing in the world but his fierce horses which he fed upon human flesh; and every stranger that came into his country was thrown to the horses. Heracles knew that he would not be able to obtain the horses unless he first conquered the king and his people, and he therefore took with him a number of brave heroes who were glad to accompany him on this expedition. As soon as the ship landed in Thrace, the heroes went to the stables, killed

[1] For the rest of the story of the Cretan bull, see p. 184.

the keeper, and brought away the horses; one of them was going to bite, but Heracles gave him such a sound blow that he had something else to think of. They had almost reached the shore, when they looked back and saw King Diomedes coming after them followed by a number of soldiers, so they tied up the horses and turned round again. Then a fierce battle took place, for the Thracians were a warlike people, but at last they were all killed, and their king made prisoner. Heracles said that he should die by the same death that he had inflicted on others, and he loosed the horses of Diomedes and gave him to them to devour. The king cried out in an agony to his horses, 'Have I not been kind to you and taken care of you?' But they had become so fierce through eating human flesh that they did not spare even their own master. One tore off his arm, another bit him in the chest, and a third in the thigh, and they soon tore him to pieces, so that he perished miserably. Heracles then caught the horses again and took them home, and when he had shown them to Eurystheus, he drove them to the foot of Mount Olympus where they were devoured by wild beasts.

King Eurystheus had a daughter, who was continually begging him to procure for her the girdle of the Queen of the Amazons. This beautiful girdle was world-famed; it had been given to the queen by Ares, the god of war, and she wore it as a mark of royalty. Eurystheus knew that to secure the queen's girdle would be a task of great danger and difficulty, and therefore he told Heracles that this was to be his ninth Labour. So Heracles again set sail with his companions, and they journeyed for many days till they came to the

country of the Amazons, who lived in Asia, near the river Thermodon. There were no men amongst them, but they were all women, and very remarkable women, too. They liked war better than anything else, and were so well skilled in riding and in shooting with the bow that no army was feared so much as the army of the Amazons. When Heracles reached their country, they happened to be in a meadow near the sea practising with their weapons of war,—all but the queen, who was sitting on the shore looking out over the sea, with her girdle glittering in the sunshine. When she saw the ship coming, she wondered who could be the strangers that ventured into her country, and most of all she marvelled at the sight of Heracles who was standing in the fore-part of the ship, dressed in his lion's skin and grasping his club. She asked him who he was and what he wanted, and he answered, 'I am Heracles, the son of Zeus, and I am performing hard labours in the service of Eurystheus; he has sent me here to fetch your girdle and take it back to Mycenae.' When the queen heard that it was Heracles, whose deeds were spoken of all over the world, she said that she would make him a present of the girdle, and came towards the ship to greet him, holding out her hand. But Hera would not allow Heracles to carry off the girdle without a struggle, and taking the form of an Amazon, she went to the meadow where the others were, and called out to them, 'A stranger is going to rob our queen.' They all rushed down to the shore and began to shoot at the strangers, killing many a brave man; but when Heracles saw that they treated him and his followers as enemies, he thought that the queen had meant to act treachously,

and he slew her, and shot at the Amazons with his arrows, and killed so many of them that they were soon obliged to fly. He took the girdle from off the dead queen and laid her corpse on the shore, and after the ship had sailed away, the Amazons came and buried her.

Some days after this, the heroes landed at the city of Troy, where they found all the people very sorrowful because an innocent maiden was to suffer death on account of the crime of her father Laomedon, the king of Troy. The gods Poseidon and Apollo, in order to try Laomedon, had entered into an engagement with him, by which they undertook to build a wall round the city that could never be destroyed. The wall was soon finished, but Laomedon, who was very miserly and who did not know that he had to deal with gods instead of men, refused to give the reward that had been agreed upon. Both the gods punished him for this. Apollo sent a pestilence into the land which destroyed both men and cattle, and Poseidon created a monster who came up every day out of the sea, and laid waste the fields devouring every living thing that he met with. Even after the pestilence had ceased, the monster still came every day, and took his fill of blood. The Trojans asked the Oracle how they could get rid of him, and the Oracle answered that the king's young daughter Hesione must be given him to eat. The Trojans were very fond of the beautiful maiden, but as they were all in danger of perishing, they demanded of Laomedon that he should give up his daughter as a victim. The king shed many tears, but at last he consented, and when the heroes landed, Hesione had just been brought to the

shore, and chained to a rock at the spot where the monster was accustomed to leave the sea. Heracles heard from the Trojans how it had all happened, and he went to the king and said that if he would give him the two horses he had received from Zeus, he would slay the monster. These horses had been given to Laomedon by Zeus to make up for the loss of his son Ganymede, a most beautiful boy, whom Zeus had caused his sacred eagle to steal away and carry off to Mount Olympus, where Ganymede lived from that time with the gods, gifted with immortality and eternal youth. When Heracles demanded these horses as his reward for rescuing Hesione, Laomedon did not hesitate to promise them, though they were the most beautiful horses in all the world, for he felt willing to part with anything he possessed in order to save his daughter. Then Heracles placed himself by the side of Hesione with a naked sword in his hand, and when the horrible monster came out of the sea, opening his huge jaws to devour the maiden, Heracles jumped down his throat and wriggled himself down into his body, and then he cut away all his entrails, so that the monster rolled about on the ground in pain, howling horribly. When Heracles thought he was dead, he crept up again out of the body and washed himself clean in the sea. The king was very glad that his daughter was saved, but avarice again took possession of him and prevented him from keeping his promise to Heracles. He tried to deceive him with fair speeches, but Heracles understood perfectly well that he was a faithless man, and he told him that he would return and punish him.

Heracles sailed back to Mycenae, and gave the girdle

of the Queen of the Amazons to Eurystheus. The king gave it to his daughter who was very much pleased with it, and at the same time he told Heracles that for his tenth Labour he was to fetch the cattle of Geryon. Wonderful stories had been brought by sailors of an island in the stream Oceanus, near the setting sun, where there lived a king named Geryon who possessed the strength of three men, for he had three bodies, six arms, and six legs. The sailors also told of the king's wonderful reddish-brown cattle which formed the chief part of his riches, and how no one dared to rob his flocks, because they were guarded day and night by a dog with two heads, who barked until he had roused a strong herdsman by whom the robber was killed without much loss of time.

Heracles set out to look for the island, and went on and on towards the West till he came to countries where the people were quite savage and barbarous. By-and-by he reached the extreme end of Europe where Africa is only separated from it by a narrow channel, and as he wished to leave some token to show how far he had journeyed, he broke off two huge rocks and set them up in the sea, and ever since that time, the sailors who pass through these two mountains of rock look up at them and say, 'Those are the Pillars of Heracles.' At last he came to the end of the land, and as he stood on the shore wondering how he should manage to reach the island of Geryon, the sun, which is much hotter in those parts than it is here, smote upon his head. This annoyed him very much, and as he was in the habit of paying back anyone who did him an injury, he now took his bow and arrows and shot at the sun-god. But

instead of being angry with him, Helios the sun-god admired him for his boldness in being so ready to fight even with gods, and he came down and gave him the golden shell in which he travels from West to East in the evening after sunset. It was an exceedingly large shell, and Heracles sailed over the sea in it till he came to the island of Geryon. The beautiful herd was in a meadow where the grass stood so high that it reached far above their knees. When Heracles came to the herd, the great dog started up, barking out of his two heads, but Heracles quickly put an end to that, for he gave him such a blow with his club that his backbone was broken through. The herdsman had however already awoke, and he came running down, intending to kill the robber as he had killed many a one before, but this time he himself met with his death by a blow from the fist of Heracles, who then drove off the cattle towards the sea. But someone told King Geryon that his cattle were being stolen, and he ran after the robber in a great rage, throwing big stones at him and screaming with all his might. Heracles waited till he came up, and then they wrestled together. Geryon wound his six arms round him hoping to throw him, but they both fell at the same time, and Geryon was the undermost. Heracles set one knee on his body, but as he leaned over to reach a stone to kill him with, Geryon managed to spring up and tried to run away. Heracles, however, shot three arrows through his three hearts, and he fell down dead.

Then Heracles went off with the herd, and when he had brought them safely to the mainland he returned the shell to the sun-god, thanking him heartily for his

help. He had to take the cattle through many lands before they finally arrived in Greece, and on his way he came to the part of Italy where Rome was afterwards built. It happened to be the hot noontide, and Heracles lay down under the shade of a tree and let the herd graze. Now it chanced that in a cave under the Mount Aventinus there lived the giant Cacus, who was very hideous to look at, and who could cook his food in his own mouth, for fire and flames spouted out of it whenever he liked. Cacus was a great robber, and when he saw the beautiful cattle he set his mind on having some of them, but Heracles looked so strong that he did not dare to take them by force, so he waited till he was asleep, and then he came out of his cave and pulled several of the cows backwards into it by their tails, so that the footprints in the sand looked like those of cows that had been driven out of the cave to pasture. When it became cooler, Heracles awoke and counted his cattle; there were too few of them, but he could not find any traces of the direction in which they had gone, and was obliged to pass on without them. But just as they were going over Mount Aventinus one of the bulls chanced to bellow, and those in the cave of Cacus answered, because they wanted to go on with the others. Heracles immediately knew what had become of his cattle, and hastened down to the cave. The giant had shoved a huge fragment of rock in front of the entrance, but Heracles in his anger was even stronger than usual, and he threw down the rock with a noise that made the whole mountain tremble. Cacus was afraid of him, and sat cowering in a corner of the cave, spouting out smoke and

flames to prevent him from coming near. But Heracles did not mind the flames, and he seized Cacus by the neck and strangled him; then he dragged him out to the light, and wondered to see how ugly he was. The stolen cattle came out of the cave of their own accord and joined the others, and Heracles drove them on further.

Some time after this, when he had nearly reached Mycenae and was travelling along the sea-shore, Hera sent a great gnat that flew about among the cattle humming and buzzing and stinging first one and then another, till they became quite unmanageable and ran away in different directions. Several jumped into the sea, and Heracles jumped in after them and brought back all that he could reach, pulling in some by their horns and driving others in front of him, but the greater number of them swam out into the open sea and perished. Then he set to work to collect those that had escaped into the forest, and tired himself till nightfall with running after them, which gave Hera great pleasure. All that he could recover he brought to Mycenae, and Eurystheus sacrificed them to Hera.

Heracles had now only two more Labours to accomplish, and Eurystheus pondered night and day as to what would be the most difficult and dangerous task he could set him. At last he told him that for his eleventh Labour he was to fetch three apples from the Garden of the Hesperides, although no mortal knew where the Garden was. When Zeus and Hera were married, the Earth had caused an apple tree to spring up, which she gave them as her present, and which was covered with apples of pure gold. Hera planted the tree

on an island in Oceanus which had never been trodden by the foot of any mortal, and in course of time a whole garden grew from it, in which all the trees bore golden apples. The garden was tended by three nymphs called the Singing Hesperides, and it was guarded by a dragon. Heracles never allowed himself to be discouraged, however hard his task might be, but always set about it in good spirits, confident of success, and he now went about asking everyone where the Hesperides lived. One day he came to a river, and some nymphs who were sitting on the bank asked him where he was going. He said, 'King Eurystheus has sent me to fetch him three apples from the Garden of the Hesperides, but I do not know where the Garden is.' One of the nymphs said, 'We do not know either, but Nereus, the old sea-god, can tell you, for he knows everything, both in earth and heaven.' Then they told Heracles where to find Nereus, and what to do in order to oblige him to answer his questions. Nereus lived in the sea, but about mid-day he came up on to the land and lay down in a grotto to sleep. When he was asleep, Heracles came and seized him by the arms, and Nereus, waking up, found himself a prisoner. He changed himself first into a wolf, and then into a lion, and lastly into a dragon, hoping that Heracles would be frightened and let go, but the nymphs had prepared him for these tricks, and instead of loosening his hold on the sea-god, he on the contrary held him tighter and tighter, till at last Nereus had to give in, and ask him what he wanted. When he heard what it was, he gave Heracles an exact description of where the Hesperides lived, and how to get there; it was a very long

way off, even further than to the island of King Geryon, but Heracles would not be disheartened, and at once began his journey.

On the way he came to Libya, where there reigned a king named Antaeus who would not allow any stranger to pass through his land without wrestling with him; and hitherto he had overcome and killed them all, for he was a son of the Earth, and his mother gave him new strength every time he touched her. Heracles wrestled with Antaeus and threw him on to the ground three times, but each time the king sprang up again stronger than before. Then Heracles perceived that the Earth gave him strength, and he raised him up in the air so that he did not touch the earth at all, and squeezed him against his own body till he died.

After this he continued his journey till he came to Egypt, where King Busiris lived, who every year sacrificed a stranger to the gods. Some time before this, the land had been unfruitful for nine years, so that many people died of hunger, and a soothsayer in a distant island who heard of this and hoped to earn a good reward without much trouble, went to Egypt and told the king that he knew by his art that the only way in which he could be reconciled to the gods was by sacrificing a stranger to them every year. But instead of giving him the reward he looked for, the king offered him up as the first sacrifice, and after this he seized a stranger every year for the same purpose. When Heracles entered the country, the king's servants happened to be on the look-out for a stranger, for the time of the yearly sacrifice had come round, and finding Heracles asleep by the wayside, they bound him with

many strong cords and brought him before the king. Heracles acted as if he had no choice but to submit to this treatment, but when the priest came with the sacrificial knife in his hand to give him the death-blow, he burst asunder the cords, and snatching the knife from the priest, stabbed the king whom nobody interfered to save, for he was a cruel man and greatly dreaded by his subjects. After this, the Egyptians offered no more human sacrifices, and yet their land remained fruitful, for the soothsayer who had commanded the sacrifice was a false prophet.

Heracles passed on through other lands till he came to the extreme end of the world where the giant Atlas lived, who had had an irksome task imposed upon him by the gods. He had to support the vault of heaven with his head and hands, and if he had neglected his duty even for a moment, the heaven would have fallen and crushed the earth to atoms. Heracles told Atlas of the errand on which he had been sent, and Atlas, who was only too glad to have an opportunity of resting his shoulders and stretching his legs, said that he would go and fetch the apples, if Heracles would meanwhile take his place in supporting the heaven. So Atlas went to the Garden, and the nymphs gave him the apples because he was their uncle, so that it was not long before he returned with them. But he found freedom so much more agreeable than the fulfilment of his task, that when he came back he said to Heracles, 'I have supported the heaven quite long enough, and now you must take your turn.' Heracles thought to himself, 'If my wits fail me now, there will be no help for me,' so he pretended to agree,

and said, 'Very well, but just let me first put my lion's skin over my head to keep the heaven from pressing so heavily upon it.' Then Atlas laid down the apples upon the ground and took up his burden again, thinking it was just for a minute, but Heracles took up the golden apples and went away and left him, and Atlas has ever since been obliged to support the heaven because he let himself be duped in this way. Heracles returned to Mycenae and showed Eurystheus the golden apples, which glittered so brightly that when the sun shone one could hardly bear to look at them; then he gave them to the goddess Athene, who took them back to the Garden of the Hesperides, for Hera would have been angry if she had kept them.

Eurystheus decreed that the twelfth and last Labour of Heracles should be to fetch the hideous dog Cerberus from the Lower World. There was a chain of bare, rugged mountains, in the centre of which was a yawning chasm stretching down far below the earth, and anyone who had the courage to go down it, came at last to the Lower World, where the shades of the dead go when they leave the earth. The gate of the Land of Shades was guarded by the great dog Cerberus, who stood there as watchman, and let everyone go in, but no one pass out again. His appearance was truly frightful, for he had three heads glistening all over with serpents which grew there instead of hair, and his tail was also an angry serpent with sharp teeth. As Heracles went down the chasm, he made up his mind that he would not try and steal the dog, but would tell Pluto that Eurystheus had commanded him to fetch him, and beg that he might be allowed to take him away. At

last he reached the Land of Shades, where there is neither day nor night, but always grey twilight, and he saw many thousand shades flitting about like moths in the dusk. They slipped away as soon as he came near them, but their flight could not be heard but only seen, for their forms were without substance. They were also without any power of thinking, but Heracles knew that they could gain both speech and consciousness by drinking blood, and as the flock of Pluto was grazing near, he seized a cow with the intention of killing it; but before he could do so, the herdsman ran after him in a rage and struck him. Heracles let go the cow, and turning to the herdsman, he rained blows upon him with his fists until he screamed with all his might for help. Queen Persephone heard his cries, and coming out of her palace, she begged Heracles to leave off beating the herdsman, which he did for her sake. Then she asked him why he had come into the Lower World, and when he told her, she took him to her husband, King Pluto, who said he would allow him to take the dog to the Upper World on condition that he captured him without the help of any weapons. Heracles put on a shield that Pluto gave him and went back to the gate, where Cerberus greeted him with a growl, showing all his great teeth. However Heracles did not mind that, but grasping the part of his neck which belonged to the middle head, he pinched it tightly with his powerful fingers. The serpents bit him in the arm and the leg, causing him great pain, but instead of letting go the head he only pinched it the harder, so that at last the dog was forced to give in, and he led him up the path without any further difficulty. When they came

to the daylight however, Cerberus moaned, and would not have gone any farther if Heracles had not compelled him, being the stronger of the two, for the light of the sun struck him just between the eyes, and hurt him so much that foam dropped from his mouth; and wherever a drop of it fell on the ground, there sprang up a plant called Nightshade, which still grows, and is a deadly poison. When Heracles had taken the dog to Mycenae and shown him to Eurystheus, he brought him to the mouth of the chasm, and released him. Then Cerberus rushed back with great bounds into his beloved darkness, and Heracles heard him barking joyfully, long after he was out of sight.

5. *The Murder of Iphitus, and the Vengeances of Heracles.*

Heracles had now served Eurystheus for twelve years, and had performed twelve great Labours for him, the hardest that have ever been accomplished by any man. During this time Megara had died, and Heracles now wished to take another wife. He heard that in Oechalia there was a beautiful maiden named Iole, the daughter of Eurytus, the king of the island of Euboea, but that Eurytus had proclaimed that no one should marry her who could not shoot with the bow better than himself and his sons. They were the best archers in the whole country, and although many suitors came to Oechalia, yet when they saw how well Eurytus could shoot, they all thought it was useless even to string their bows, and went away home again in despair. Heracles resolved that he also would go

and sue for Iole, and he went out into the open field with Eurytus and his sons, in order to contend with them for the prize. All showed marvellous skill in shooting, but the arrow of Heracles pierced the breast of a wild dove so far off that the others could scarcely see it till it was brought down, and they were obliged to confess that he had beaten them. But Eurytus taunted him and said, 'Would you have me give you my daughter for your wife? When the gods send you children you throw them into the fire.' Heracles was enraged with Eurytus for mocking at his misfortune, and he went away vowing that he would one day be revenged upon him.

Some time after this, a robber stole twelve of the finest cattle that Eurytus possessed, and he sent his son Iphitus to look for them. Iphitus went to several places in search of them, and finally came to Tiryns where Heracles was. When Heracles saw Iphitus he was reminded of the way in which his father had insulted him, and it made him so angry that he struck the boy dead, though afterwards when he became calmer he would gladly have recalled the deed. He went to Neleus, the king of Pylos, and begged him to purge him from the stain of blood, but Neleus, who was a friend of Eurytus, refused to do so, but on the contrary banished him from the country, blaming him for what he had done. Heracles found another wise man who consented to purify him, but the gods were, notwithstanding this, still angry with him on account of the murder of Iphitus, and as a punishment, they visited him with a sore sickness, of which he could neither get well nor die, and which

caused him terrible suffering. Heracles went to the Oracle at Delphi and asked the Pythia what he could do to have the sickness taken away from him, but Apollo, who inspired the Pythia as to what she should say, would not give any answer. Then Heracles got into a great rage, and he tore up from the ground the sacred Tripod on which the priestess sat, and carried it away on his back. Apollo saw the theft, and he came down from heaven and demanded the Tripod back again. No other would have dared to meet his angry look, but Heracles was not in the least afraid, and he refused to give it up. They were just going to fight about it, and had already taken their places for the struggle, when a thunderbolt fell upon the ground between them. They knew that this was a warning from their father Zeus, and they agreed to lay aside their ill-feeling and make peace; Heracles gave back the Tripod, and Apollo pronounced the Oracle. It was that Heracles must serve as a slave for the space of three years and give the money for which he was sold to Eurytus, and that then his illness would be at an end.

So Heracles allowed himself to be sold as a slave by Hermes, the messenger of the gods, and he was bought by the beautiful Omphale, queen of Lydia. Eurytus refused to take the money, but the gods decided that it was the same as if he had done so, and Heracles was freed from his sickness. Omphale made use of her strong slave for all kinds of service, both in freeing the land from wild beasts, and in punishing wicked robbers, so that the Lydians lived in peace and safety; and Heracles loved the beautiful Omphale with all his heart, and was ready to do anything in the world in order to

please her. She was very proud of being able to command the mighty hero as if he were a little child, and in order to show the people how obedient he was to her, she made him sit among her maidens in women's clothes spinning at the distaff, whilst she dressed herself up in the lion's skin, as if she were the man and he the woman, and Heracles allowed her to do just as she would with him because of the great love he bore her.

When the three years were ended, Heracles left the palace of Omphale, and went through the cities of Greece asking if any heroes would set out with him for Troy, for he meant to carry out his threat of punishing King Laomedon for his faithlessness. So many heroes came that they filled six large ships, and they sailed to Troy and besieged the city. They set up ladders with which to climb over the walls, and pressed on notwithstanding the stones and javelins that the Trojans threw down upon them, but they would never have succeeded in entering the city without the help of Heracles. When the city was taken, Heracles passed a sentence of death upon the king and his sons, and shot them all together, only sparing the youngest whose name was Podarces, because he was too young to have had any part in the treachery of his father. Heracles gave the beautiful Hesione to the hero Telamon who had been the first to scale the wall, and as she wept very much at leaving Troy, he told her that she might take one of the prisoners with her. She did not take long to consider who it should be, but immediately held out her hand to her little brother Podarces. Then Heracles said that she must buy him, so she took off her veil, which was the only one she had,

and threw it down for the purchase-money; and from that time her brother was called Priam, which means Bought. He came to Greece with his sister Hesione, but when he grew up to be a man he returned to Troy and became king of the country.

When Augeas and the others who had wronged Heracles heard of the punishment that had overtaken Laomedon, they were afraid, and assembled all their warriors to protect them, for Heracles had announced his intention of marching against them as soon as he returned to Greece. But Hera, who still hated him, tried to destroy him on his way home. She commanded the god of Slumber to send Zeus into a deep sleep, and while he lay unconscious, she raised a tremendous storm on the sea through which Heracles was sailing. All his companions were very much frightened, but Heracles was not in the least disturbed, and before the waves could make a wreck of the ship, Zeus awoke, and seeing his son in danger, calmed the sea so that it became quite smooth and the fishes came up again from the bottom to play. Zeus knew that it was Hera who had raised the storm, and he punished her for it. He tied her hands together with a golden chain, and attached a heavy weight to each of her feet, and then he suspended her in the clouds, where she was obliged to hang all day long in great pain, with the winds and storms for her only companions.

Heracles was none the worse for the storm, and as soon as he had landed in Greece with the other heroes, he led them against Elis, the city of King Augeas, and conquered it. Augeas would now have gladly parted with his whole herd if that would have saved his life,

but Heracles killed him and all his sons except Phyleus, the one who had refused to bear false witness against him and had been banished by his father in consequence. He gave the country into the hands of Phyleus, and then he led his followers from Elis to Pylos, where he punished King Neleus for having refused to purge him from the stain of blood. Of the whole race of the king, the only one who remained alive after the visit of Heracles was a little boy named Nestor, whom his father Neleus had sent to be brought up in a neighbouring country, and who grew up to be a brave and wise hero.

6. *The Marriage of Heracles with Deianira, and his Death.*

There was still one man left whom Heracles desired to punish, and this was Eurytus. But he deferred his revenge for a time, in order to undertake a pleasanter expedition to the court of King Oeneus, of Calydon, whose beautiful daughter Deianira he wished to marry. Deianira was a maiden who delighted in driving horses that had never been broken in, and who knew how to use the lance and the bow. She had another distinguished lover, the river-god Acheloüs, and as neither he nor Heracles would give way to the other, they determined to fight it out, and agreed that whichever conquered should have the bride. Acheloüs came out of his stream in the form of a bull, and Heracles had a hard struggle with him, for his opponent had the strength of a bull, and at the same time the wisdom of a god. Acheloüs ran at him intending to gore him with his horns, and if Heracles had not been on his guard, he would have

been pierced through. For a long time the struggle lasted, each trying to overpower the other by strength or by craft, and when the river-god laid his fore-feet upon the shoulders of Heracles who was clothed in his lion's skin, and pressed his strong chest against him in the hope of throwing him, it looked as if a lion and a bull had embraced each other. But at last Heracles laid hold of one of the horns of Acheloüs and tore at it with all his might till he succeeded in breaking it off, and then the bull bellowed horribly, and ran back, bleeding, into the river.

So Heracles remained the victor, and Oeneus gave him Deianira to be his wife, and she was glad to have such a noble hero for her husband. Heracles wanted to keep the horn as a trophy, but Acheloüs gave him instead of it the wonderful horn of the goat Amalthea who had been the nurse of Zeus.[1] This horn had been blessed by Zeus, and anyone who held it in his hand might wish for anything he liked to eat or drink, and immediately it was there. For this reason it was called the Horn of Plenty, because it produced all kinds of food in abundance.

Heracles lived many years in Calydon with Deianira, not spending his time slothfully, but fighting against all the robbers and wicked men in the neighbourhood. But one day it happened that the boy who held the washing-basin and poured water over his hands before meals, was careless and showered the water all over him. Heracles gave him what he intended to be a little box on the ears, but a blow from him came with such violence that the boy immediately fell down dead.

[1] See page 3.

Heracles was very much grieved, and he determined to leave the city of Calydon, and set out with Deianira for Trachis where an old friend of his lived. On the way they came to a broad river over which there was no bridge, but the Centaur Nessus used to carry travellers across on his horse's back for a trifling payment. Heracles entrusted Deianira to him, and said that he himself would follow without help. The Centaur, however, was so greatly charmed with the beauty of Deianira, that as he swam with her across the stream he made up his mind that he would carry her off. So when he had reached the other side, instead of letting her jump off his back, he held her fast and ran away with her. Deianira stretched out her arms to Heracles who was still on the farther bank, and screamed for help. Then Heracles took his bow and shot a poisoned arrow into the shoulder of the Centaur, and he fell down and was obliged to let go his hold of Deianira. Nessus felt that the poison would soon kill him, and he longed to revenge himself on Heracles by doing him some injury. So he said to Deianira, 'Take a cloth and dip it in my blood, and do not let Heracles see it; but if ever you are afraid that he loves another woman better than you, sprinkle the blood over his clothing, and he will be unable to leave you. You must take care, however, not to touch it yourself.' The blood had been poisoned by the arrow of Heracles, and anyone whose skin was even touched by it must die, but Deianira did not know this; she thought the Centaur was speaking in good faith and determined to follow his advice, for she loved Heracles with all her heart, and desired above all things that he should always love her as much in return.

Nessus died soon after he had spoken to Deianira, and Heracles continued his journey with her. When they came to Trachis which is not far from Euboea, he remembered the vengeance that he had purposed to execute upon Eurytus, and assembling all his companions, he set sail for his island. Eurytus armed his sons and all his men of war, and met him outside the walls of Oechalia. Then a battle was fought in which many wounds were given and received, and Heracles slew Eurytus and his sons, which, when the others saw, they gave up all hope and betook themselves to flight. Heracles entered the city with his companions and gave them leave to take any plunder they chose, for all the people surrendered themselves and their possessions to him, only asking that their lives might be spared.

Heracles now desired to offer a solemn sacrifice to Zeus as a token of his gratitude for the victory, and he sent the herald Lichas to procure from Deianira a festal robe suitable for the occasion. Deianira was greatly afraid that Heracles might forsake her for the beautiful Iole whom he had formerly wished to marry, and remembering what the Centaur had told her to do if ever she had any special reason for desiring that Heracles should be true to her, she took the cloth which had been soaked in his blood, and smeared all the inner side of the robe with it. Lichas took the robe to Heracles, and he put it on. But when the blood had become warmed by the heat of his body, it burst out into flames and burnt Heracles so terribly that in his agony he seized Lichas by the feet and flung him three times against the rocks, till his face was so battered that none of the features could be dis-

tinguished. Then he tried to tear off the dress, but it clung so closely to his skin that pieces of his flesh came off with it. He suffered unspeakable tortures, which made him cry out with the pain and roll on the ground in agony, and then he moaned so piteously that the very stones might have felt for him, but no one dared to go near him. For a short time the pain made him quite mad; then he controlled himself with a mighty effort and resolved what he would do. He got into a ship that was going to Greece, and when he arrived there he ascended Mount Oeta, accompanied by some of his friends; the poison still caused him terrible suffering, but he was able to bear it in silence now. On the top of Mount Oeta he built a huge funeral pile and mounted to the top of it; then he asked his friends to set fire to it, but none of them would do so,—they only stood round weeping. Presently however a herdsman came along the road, and Heracles called out to him, and said that he would give him his bow and arrows if he would set fire to the funeral pile. The herdsman consented to do so for the sake of the beautiful bow, and he brought a burning torch with which he set the wood alight. The wind fanned the flames and they mounted higher and higher, but before they reached Heracles himself, a sound of thunder and lightning was heard, and a cloud came down which covered the funeral pile and in which he was carried up to the top of Mount Olympus. The gods gifted him with immortality as a recompense for his noble deeds, and they said that he should henceforth be as one of themselves. Even Hera did not grudge him this reward, for her hatred had at last been conquered by his grand

and godlike Labours, and when Heracles appeared among the Immortals in the form of a god, she led her daughter, the goddess Hebe, towards him, and said that he should have her for his wife. Poor Deianira was already in the Lower World, for when she heard of the evil that had been wrought by the robe, she went into her bed-chamber and hanged herself.

Heracles was honoured on the earth as a god, and men built temples to him, and kept his great deeds in constant remembrance.

XXVII.

THE QUEST OF THE ARGONAUTS.

1. *The Golden Fleece.*

THERE was once a king in the land of Greece called Athamas, and he had a wife and two children, whose names were Phrixus and Helle. But the king loved another woman better than his wife, and he thrust away his wife and made the other woman queen. The children had now a step-mother, who at first was very kind to them, but afterwards when she had children of her own it was a different thing, and Phrixus and Helle had a bad time of it. Their own mother remained in the city living on a dole that she received from the king, but she was not allowed to enter the palace; sometimes, however, she used to come secretly after dark, and then she kissed the children and gave them little presents, which made them very happy. The step-mother was always trying to find some means of getting rid of the children, and at last she thought of a plan which she hoped would be successful. When the time for sowing the corn came round, she ordered all the women in the country to roast the seed secretly, so that though the corn was sown as usual it did not spring up, for the seeds were dead because they had been cooked. Then there was great distress all over the country, and the

king sent messengers to Delphi to ask the Oracle how the land could be made fruitful again. But the wicked queen took the messengers aside and bribed them by the promise of a great reward to deceive the king. They did not go to Delphi at all, but hid themselves outside the city until there would have been time to go and come back again, and then they sprinkled their clothes with dust as if they had taken a long journey, and went to the king and took him the message that the queen had put into their mouths,—which was that he must sacrifice his son Phrixus to the gods, or else the fields would never be fruitful again. The king was very unwilling to do this, but the people pressed him until he consented to the sacrifice, for they were afraid they would all die of hunger.

The true mother was very sad, and she wept all day and all night because her son was going to be killed. And the gods had pity on her, and sent Hermes, the messenger, to take her a ram covered all over with golden wool that shone like the beautiful sun, and tell her that the ram should carry away her children to a place of safety. Then the mother was comforted, and after dark she fetched the children from the palace by stealth and placed them both on the ram's back. Phrixus sat in front and held on fast by the horns, and Helle was behind with her arms round her brother. When they had taken leave of their mother, the Golden Ram set out on his journey; first he flew up as high as the clouds, and then he trotted along the path of the birds, mid-way between heaven and earth, and it seemed to the children, as they looked down, as if the houses and trees were all running away from them.

They journeyed on all night in the bright star-light, and when the sun rose they were already far from home, and found themselves above the sea which lies between Europe and Asia. Helle wanted to take a last look at the beautiful land of Greece and turned round that she might see it better, but in her eagerness she let go of her brother and fell far down into the sea, and even before she touched the water she was dead from the effect of the great fall. Phrixus was very, very sorry, and he shed so many tears that the fishermen below thought it was beginning to rain. Ever since that time the Greeks have called that sea the Hellespont, which means the sea of Helle.

The Golden Ram flew on and on till he had passed over the Black Sea and reached the city of Colchis, which was a very long way from the kingdom of Athamas. Phrixus sacrificed the ram to the gods, and he presented its golden fleece to Aeëtes the king of the country, who hung it on a tree in a forest near the city and placed beside it a powerful dragon that never went to sleep. Phrixus was kindly treated by the king; he lived in his palace and sat at his table, and when he grew up, Aeëtes gave him his daughter for a wife.

After this, a great misfortune befell King Athamas and the wicked step-mother. He had incurred the anger of Hera,[1] and she afflicted him with madness. One day as he was returning from hunting, he saw his two young children playing in front of the palace, but they seemed to him to be two young deer, and he took his bow and shot the eldest boy right through the heart. He was just going to shoot the other child, but

[1] See page 63.

the mother, who was close by, saw that the king was mad, and she took it up in her arms and ran away as fast as she could. Athamas pursued her with his arrow on the string, until the queen finding that she could not escape, threw herself into the sea with her child, and they were both drowned. Athamas was overcome with grief when his reason returned to him, and he left the kingdom and went to the Oracle to ask what he should do. The answer he received was that he was to settle in a land where he would be the guest of wild beasts. Athamas did not know how this could be, but after wandering about for a long time he came to an almost uninhabited country, where he one day saw two or three wolves devouring a sheep which they had killed. When Athamas came near them they ran away, and as he had eaten nothing for several days and was almost starving, he cut off a piece of the raw sheep and eat it hastily, and then it occurred to him that he had eaten the wolves' dinner, and was therefore their guest. So he wandered no longer, but settled down in that place, and when others came to live in the same neighbourhood, Athamas became their king, and ruled over them until his death some years later.

2. *The Journey to Colchis.*

Some time had passed away and Phrixus was already dead, when it happened that the king of Iolcus, in Greece, whose name was Pelias, sent one day to the Oracle at Delphi to ask what would befall him in the future, and the Oracle in reply told him to beware of the One-sandalled man: the Greeks did not wear shoes

like ours, but sandals, which were soles of leather, tied on to the feet with straps. Many years passed by, and the king never saw a man with only one sandal on, and had almost forgotten the warning of the Oracle. But one day when he was going to offer a great sacrifice to Poseidon, he invited all his friends to the banquet, and amongst others, Jason his brother's son, who lived at some little distance from the city. On his way to Iolcus, Jason had to pass through a brook which had become swollen by heavy rain, and one of his sandals got loose in the water and remained sticking in the marshy soil. He could not get it again because the water was too deep, and was obliged to walk half bare-foot into the city. As soon as Pelias saw him, he was put in mind of the Oracle, and he said to him, 'What should you do to get rid of a man if you had been told that he was likely to kill you.' Jason laughed and answered, 'I should send him to fetch the Golden Fleece.' For it was a dangerous journey to Colchis, and the powerful King Aeëtes would have parted with one of his eyes rather than with the Golden Fleece, so there was every chance that anyone who ventured on such an undertaking as that, would perish. Then Pelias said, 'The Oracle has warned me to beware of you; choose your companions and set out in search of it.'

Jason was a brave and fearless hero, and was quite ready for the expedition. He sent messengers to summon all the noblest heroes to come with him, and fifty were found willing to undertake the journey, besides the strong Heracles, who also said that he would go with them. There was a man in Iolcus, named Argus,

who was skilled in shipbuilding, and he fashioned for them a great vessel with places for fifty rowers. The goddess Athene sent a beam for it, made of sacred oak, which could speak, and it was inserted in the front part of the ship. She was a noble vessel, and all who saw her were filled with wonder and delight. They called her the Argo, after the name of the builder, and the heroes who sailed in her were called Argonauts. When she was ready they pushed her out to sea, and each man took his oar in his hand. Besides the rowers there was a hero who sat at the helm, and Jason the leader, who had no special place assigned to him in the ship. Many people came down to the shore to watch them sail away, and wish them a prosperous journey. The ship went as fast as a bird can fly, the helmsman steered, the rowers rowed, and the Sacred Beam warned the heroes of the rocks below the water, so that they might steer the ship clear of them.

After sailing for some days, they came to the beautiful island of Lemnos, and as they were tired of rowing and wanted to rest, they went on shore. There was not a single man in the island, only women. Some time before this, the men had purposed to thrust away their wives and take others, and so the women had killed them all, not even excepting the old men and boys, and they determined to be a nation of women only, like the Amazons. The only man left alive in the whole island was the father of the Queen, Hypsipele, whom she loved very dearly and resolved to save at any cost. There was a secret room in the palace in which she hid him, and every day she took him food by stealth, for if the other women had discovered what

she had done they would perhaps have killed her.[1] The Argonauts were very much astonished at seeing women do all the things that are usually undertaken by men, such as ploughing fields, felling trees in the wood, and practising with weapons of war. The heroes asked where the men were, and they told them why they had killed them. They did not however refuse to receive the strange heroes, but entertained them hospitably, and the Argonauts enjoyed themselves very much on the island. Many of them found it much more agreeable than sitting at their oars in the ship, but after some time had passed, Jason called them together, and they went back to the Argo and continued their journey. They did not stop again till they had reached the country of the Doliones, and then they knew that they had left Europe behind them.

The Doliones always kept watchmen near the sea to give notice of any ships that were coming, for there were a great many pirates cruising about that sea who fell upon honest folk and robbed them, and the Doliones had lately suffered much at their hands. When the Argo came near their land, a number of the Doliones assembled on the shore and asked the heroes what they wanted. Jason said, 'We are going to Colchis to fetch the Golden Fleece, and we should like to rest here.' On hearing this the Doliones received them kindly, and their king came down to the shore and sent for several cattle and great skins of wine to be brought. Fires were lighted, the cattle were killed and roasted, and the Doliones feasted till the evening with the heroes, who then sailed away. But a great storm came on, and it was so dark that they could not even see the mast of

[1] For what afterwards happened to Hypsipele, see pages 215–17

the ship. They were unable to make head against the high waves, so they pulled in the oars and let the ship dance to the whistling of the wind, but in this way they lost their reckoning, and no longer knew either the direction from which they had come, or that in which they desired to go. At last the storm subsided, and they made for some land which they could just distinguish not far from where they were, but when they tried to land, the inhabitants came with weapons to drive them away, for they thought they were pirates. The Argonauts killed many enemies, but when the day dawned they discovered that they were the Doliones,—neither party had recognised the other in the darkness. Then there was great weeping for the dead, especially for the king who had entertained the heroes so royally the day before, and had been slain by them in the night. The Argonauts remained three days longer in that country and celebrated magnificent games in honour of the king,—running races, wrestling with one another, and measuring their skill in shooting with the bow and in throwing the lance,—and whoever did the best obtained the prize.

Then for the second time they sailed away from the land of the Doliones. They were now not far from the Black Sea, and were coasting along by the country of Mysia, when it happened that some of the oars broke, and they had to stop and go into a forest to get some new ones. Heracles went far into the forest to look for the best trees, taking with him a boy named Hylas who served him and whom he loved as his own son. Heracles was thirsty after his work, and he told the boy to go to the nearest stream and draw him some

water in a pitcher. Hylas found a clear transparent pool fringed with lovely flowers, and stooped down to draw the water, but the nymphs to whom it belonged saw him and were so struck by his great beauty, for he was the most beautiful boy in all Greece, that they came up from the bottom to draw him down into the pool; and they seized him, one by the hand and another by the foot, and said, 'Come down to our house, beautiful boy, and we will play with you.' Hylas did not want to go, and he screamed and struggled with all his might, but the nymphs were stronger than he, and dragged him down. When Heracles heard his cry, he thought the boy must have been carried off by robbers, so he took his oar and ran down to the brook, and not finding him there, he rushed frantically through the forest in search of him, saying that he would not go back to the ship without Hylas. Meanwhile evening had come on, the other heroes had all returned to the ship, and they sailed away, unmindful of Heracles. The next morning they saw indeed that he was not there, but they could not sail all the way back again, and they trusted that they would be able to bring home the Golden Fleece without him. So Heracles returned to Greece, where he accomplished his twelve great Labours.

Some days afterwards the heroes landed again, and this time it was in a country where the king compelled every stranger who came into his dominions to measure his strength with him in boxing, and he was so practised a boxer that he had overcome and killed all who had contended with him. When he heard that a ship with many heroes in it had come to his land, he said

that if there was any brave man among them, he was prepared to fight with him. Now there were two heroes on board the Argo named Castor and Pollux, who were twin brothers. Castor was skilled in managing untamed horses, and Pollux excelled in boxing. Pollux resolved to punish the haughty king, so he accepted his offer of boxing with him and very soon dealt him a fatal blow. A great many of his followers had come to watch the fight, expecting to see their king fell the stranger to the ground, and when they saw that he was dead, they tried to kill Pollux in order to avenge him; but the Argonauts seized their weapons, and soon a number of their enemies were dead and the rest had taken to flight.

Farther on, the Argonauts came to a country where there lived a seer named Phineus, who would gladly however have parted with his power of reading the future if that would have delivered him from his misery. He had once revealed the future contrary to the will of the gods, and as a punishment they made him blind, and prevented him from having anything to eat. Whenever a meal was spread before him, there came from heaven two monstrous beings with faces and bodies like maidens, but whose feet and wings were those of ravens. They were called Harpies, and their names were Storm-foot and Swift-wing. They snatched away the best part of the food and gobbled it up, and what they left smelt so badly that Phineus could not eat it for loathing. The old man was wasted away with hunger, and there was nothing left of him but skin and bones. The Argonauts begged him to give them good advice about their journey, and he promised to do so if

they would rid him of the Harpies. It happened that among them were two sons of Boreas, the god of the north wind; they had wings on their shoulders and could fly like birds, but it had been decreed by fate that if ever they failed to catch what they set out in pursuit of, they must die immediately. They were quite willing to attack the Harpies, and next time they came to snatch away the food from Phineus, the heroes drew their swords, spread their wings, and set out in chase of them. The Harpies flew backwards and forwards in all directions over both sea and land, but at last Storm-foot was obliged to give in, and her pursuer was just going to seize her when her wings failed altogether, and she fell down into a river below, where she was drowned. Swift-wing was still able to flutter a little, but presently she also gave in, and fell among some soft grass. Her pursuer came after her and pierced her through with his sword, and then the heroes returned, the sword of one of them being still wet with the blood of Swift-wing. From that time Phineus could eat his meals in peace which was a great comfort to him. He told the Argonauts that they would soon come to two wonderful rocks, and instructed them what to do when they reached them, and he said that if they passed these in safety they would arrive at Colchis without further danger.

After rowing for half a day, the heroes came to the rocks of which Phineus had told them, and never in their lives had they seen anything so wonderful. They were two huge rocks, not fastened to the bottom of the sea, but sailing about separately, and every now and then they clashed together and great waves broke over them, and there was a noise as if the rocks were going

to break in pieces, but as they were made of the hardest stone, they remained quite sound. They darted about so quickly, and clashed against each other so constantly, that no ship had ever been able to pass them; every vessel that had attempted it had been crushed to atoms, with every soul on board. But the Argo was very swift, being rowed by fifty heroes, and Phineus had told them to send out a dove in front of them, and that if the dove passed through the rocks safely, they also might venture; but if it were crushed, they would have to turn back, for the speed of the Argo was just equal to that of a dove. So when the rocks separated from one another, they sent out the dove, and it arrived happily at the other side, with only a few of its tail-feathers torn out. Next time the rocks opened a pathway, they also steered through them, rowing with all their might. The ship shot through like an arrow, and just the same thing happened to the Argo as to the dove, for the decoration of the hinder-part of the vessel was torn off, just as the bird's feathers had been. And when the heroes looked back, they saw the rocks standing still: they had played their game for the last time, for it had been decreed by fate that if ever they allowed a ship to pass them, they would become rooted to the ground. So that ever since that time, ships have been able to sail past these rocks, as fast or as slowly as they please.

3. *The Fight for the Golden Fleece.*

Some days after this, the heroes reached Colchis. Many people came together to look at them, for never before had a ship reached their country from Greece,

and besides this, the Argo was a noble vessel, unlike anything the Colchians had ever seen, and she had a number of brave heroes on board. The Argonauts had fastened ropes to the ship with great stones at the end, and these they threw into the sea to serve as anchors. Then Jason said that some one must take him to the king, and a number of people accompanied him as far as the palace. Jason was a noble-looking man, and for a mantle he wore the skin of a spotted panther that he had killed himself. When he saw king Aeëtes, he said that he had come from the home of Phrixus, and that King Pelias had sent him to fetch the Golden Fleece. Now Aeëtes prized the Golden Fleece more than all his other treasures, and had no intention of parting with it; but as he was a crafty man, he said that he would give it to Jason if he would be willing to give a proof of his real desire for it, by ploughing a piece of land with two wild bulls and sowing it with dragon's teeth. The king thought that if Jason ventured to undertake this he would certainly perish, for the bulls had brazen feet, and out of their mouths issued a stream of fire which burnt up everything that came near them; besides this, he knew that when the dragon's teeth were sown, armed men would rise up from them and kill Jason, so that even if he succeeded in managing the wild bulls, it would not be of much avail. But Aeëtes did not tell Jason all this; and though Jason felt sure that the task which the king assigned to him would be no easy one, he accepted it without hesitation and agreed to meet him the next day in a field near the city in order to accomplish it. When Jason went back to the ship, the heroes asked him what the king had said, and he told

them. Then as night was coming on, they lay down on the shore, wrapped themselves up in their cloaks, and went to sleep.

King Aeëtes had a daughter called Medea who was a powerful enchantress, and knew the properties of all kinds of herbs and how to make use of them for good or evil. She used to go to the mountains at night when the moon was shining to pluck herbs, and prepared all manner of magic drinks from them; she also understood other kinds of witchcraft. When she saw Jason standing in her father's palace, she thought he looked like a true hero, and she felt a great love for him and longed to help him. So in the night she left the palace and came to the shore where the heroes were asleep. She at once recognised Jason and awoke him, and he rubbed his eyes in astonishment at seeing the maiden standing beside him in the moonlight, tall and beautiful, with her long white veil thrown back. She said to him, 'My father, the king, intends to kill you, but if you will swear to be my friend, I will help you.' She told him all about the bulls and the dragon's teeth, and said that it would not be possible for him to overcome them without her help. The beautiful princess pleased Jason well, and he promised that if he obtained the Golden Fleece through her assistance, he would take her home with him to be his wife. Then Medea gave him a box containing ointment which protected any one who used it from being burnt by fire or wounded by steel for the space of one whole day. She told him to anoint his shield his spear and his body with it the next morning, and then the bulls and the armed men would not be able to do him any harm; she also taught him a trick

which she said he would find useful as a means of defence against the armed men. When they had talked for some time longer, Medea wrapped her veil round her and went home; the people in the palace were not surprised, for they thought she had been wandering about on the mountain as usual, collecting herbs.

At day-break the king betook himself to the field with all his courtiers and many other people, and Medea went also, attended by her women. Near the field was a sacred forest in which the two bulls were feeding; and in this same forest hung the Golden Fleece, from which bright rays of light might be seen streaming as the trees were swayed backwards and forwards by the wind. The plough was standing ready in the field, and one of the king's servants held in his hand a helmet which contained the dragon's teeth. Soon afterwards Jason arrived with the Argonauts looking in such good spirits that the king and his followers were astonished, for they did not know about the ointment that had made him proof against fire and steel, —the Argonauts knew about it, however, for Jason had told them. The king commanded Jason to fetch the bulls, and he went into the forest and soon found them. They came towards him bellowing loudly, with the bright fire streaming from their mouths and nostrils, meaning to kick him to death with their hoofs. But their fiery breath had no effect on Jason, and their brazen hoofs could not do him any harm. He seized them by the horns and dragged them along, and he was so strong that although they struggled with all their might and tried to pull first to the right and

then to the left, they were obliged to follow him. It was a strange sight to see him coming out of the forest with the fire streaming over his face and body, and the bulls kicking him with their brazen hoofs, yet notwithstanding this, whole and unscathed. He dragged the bulls to the plough and laid the yoke upon their necks, then he drove them through the field making furrows as he went along, and when they were stubborn and refused to go on, he pricked them with a goad that he had in his hand. He went up and down three times, until the king said it was enough, and then he unharnessed the bulls and let them go back into the forest. The king was very much astonished at his having performed the first part of his task so successfully, but when he gave him the helmet with the dragon's teeth in it, he felt sure that the armed men would at all events make an end of him. Jason walked up and down the furrows, and every here and there he threw in a tooth and stamped down a clod over it with his foot. When he had finished he looked round,—the armed men were already rising out of the ground, and in a little while the whole fifty had sprung up; they were completely covered with brazen armour, and had very angry faces. Then Jason remembered the trick that Medea had taught him, and he took up stones from the ground and threw them among the band of warriors without letting the king see what he was doing. Every time one of the armed men felt a stone strike him, he began to fight with his neighbour because he thought it was he who had thrown it. So in a short time there was a fierce battle raging amongst the armed men, and Jason found his task an easy one: he

took his shield and spear, and killed the warriors in the confusion, till at last they all lay dead on the ground, and the earth was quite red with their blood.

All the people were full of admiration of the brave hero, and when Jason took off his helmet and wiped his forehead, they thronged round him, praising his great achievement. But the king was angry, and went away with his courtiers without speaking a word to Jason. He was still determined not to part with the Golden Fleece, and made up his mind to kill the hero who had come to ask for it. When he reached the palace, he chose out the strongest of his soldiers and told them that he would himself lead them to the shore early the next morning while the Argonauts were still asleep, and that they would kill the heroes and burn the ship. Aeëtes expected to take the Argonauts by surprise, but Medea went again that evening to Jason and told him what her father intended. She also said that she would get the Golden Fleece for him, and that they must flee away that night. So they went together into the forest in which the Fleece hung;—high up among the branches shone the golden light, and at the foot of the tree was the dragon that never slept. Jason waited at a little distance while Medea went alone to the dragon, for she was accustomed to take him his food every day, and he knew her and allowed her to stroke him. Medea spoke kindly to the dragon, and gave him some bread that she had brought with her. But the bread had been soaked in a sweet juice which throws every one who tastes it into the deepest sleep, so when the dragon had swallowed it, his eyes closed for the first time in his life, and he fell asleep and snored so loudly

that all the birds in the wood awoke and flew away. Then Jason came forward and climbed up the tall oak and fetched down the Fleece, and when he had done this, they went back to the shore. Jason had thrown the Fleece over his arm, and the Argonauts, who were on the look-out for him, could see him coming towards them with his shining prize while he was still a long way off, and they pulled up the great stones which had been used as anchors, and made everything ready for their departure. But Medea went back once more to her father's palace, and creeping quietly upstairs, she took her little brother Absyrtus gently out of his bed, and then set out on her flight. She took him with her, not because she loved her brother, but because she thought he might be found useful in case her father should pursue them. You will soon hear what happened to him.

4. *The Journey Home.*

When they were all in the ship, the heroes pushed off and sailed away. As it was midnight the helmsman had to steer by the stars, but he knew how to guide the ship towards the setting sun which was the direction in which Greece lay, and by daybreak they were already far from the land. King Aeëtes came down to the shore with his followers, who took with them weapons to fight with, and also torches for burning the ship. But when they reached it, they stood rubbing their eyes, for they could see neither the ship nor the heroes, and when they looked towards the forest, there was the dragon in a deep sleep, and the Golden Fleece

was gone. Soon the king heard that Medea had fled and had taken with her the little Absyrtus, and then he knew who it was that had helped the Argonauts, and he was more angry than he had ever been in his life. He made his men get ready the swiftest ship they had, and promised to reward them nobly if they succeeded in overtaking the Argo.

They rowed with all their might, and towards evening they came in sight of the Argo. Medea knew that all on board would be killed if they fell into the hands of her father, and when his ship had almost overtaken the Argo, she took a long knife and stabbed her brother Absyrtus to death, and cut him in pieces before the eyes of Aeëtes and flung the pieces into the sea. The king who had been so angry, now tore his hair for grief; he no longer cared about the Golden Fleece, and his only desire was to obtain the corpse of his son in order to bury it, for at that time it was believed that those whose bodies were not buried had no rest in the Lower World, and the king would not for the world have let his child's body be eaten by the fishes. He commanded his men to stop and look for the pieces, and by the time they had collected them all, the Argo was far out of sight, and they were obliged to turn back. The king grieved bitterly for his dead son, and when he came home he buried him with great magnificence. When that was done, the wish nearest his heart was to catch the Argo, and he manned three ships with sailors, and told them to go in search of her and never to return till they had found her. They sailed about in all directions, but could not find a trace of the ship anywhere, so as they were afraid to go back to the king

without her, they moored on a strange island, where they settled down and built houses and remained for the rest of their lives. Aeëtes was meanwhile spending all his days in watching for their return.

A violent storm now overtook the Argo. The sea was stirred up and refused to carry peacefully on her bosom the ship in which the sister had murdered her brother, and the waves rose as high as mountains, so that those who were on board the ship had to hold on to the sides and mast in order to avoid falling into the sea. At last the Sacred Beam which was planted in the fore part of the vessel, spoke, and said that the storm would not cease, nor would they have any prosperity in their voyage, until Medea and Jason had been purged from the stain of blood, and that they had better go to the enchantress Circe and beg her to do this for them. So they sailed to the island where Circe lived, and Medea and Jason left the others in the ship and went ashore to the palace of the enchantress and placed themselves on the hearth, which was the place sacred to those who came to sue for help. Circe asked what their request was, and Medea told her all that had happened and begged her to atone for their crimes. At first she refused to do this, for King Aeëtes was her brother, and it was her nephew that they had murdered; but at last she was persuaded, and purified them with sacrifices and baths. When this had been done, they went back to the ship and continued their voyage, and they had now such lovely weather that the fishes came up from the bottom of the sea and played merrily in the sunshine.

After some time the Argonauts came to the wicked

Sirens, who were treacherous nymphs that lived in the sea. Their faces were marvellously beautiful, and they sang so enchantingly that every one who heard them was bewitched and could not help going to them. But under the water they had great ugly claws instead of hands, and their bodies ended in a hideous fish-tail. They clutched those who came to them with their claws and ate them up, and all the reef where they lived was strewn with the bones of the men they had eaten. But even those who knew how cruel and treacherous they were, could no longer believe it when they heard them sing, and could never resist jumping into the sea and swimming towards them. When the Sirens saw the ship approaching, full of noble heroes, they thought they were going to have a grand feast and began to sing their sweetest songs. They would have enticed even the Argonauts, and all the witchcraft of Medea would have been powerless to save them, if there had not been a hero on board, named Orpheus, who was famous all over Greece for his singing and playing, and who had such marvellous power over the hearts of men that no one who heard him could refrain from weeping, however cruel and hard he might be. So the moment the Sirens began, Orpheus took his lyre and sang in opposition to them, and he sang so gloriously that the heroes listened to him rather than to the Sirens, and the dolphins, who are very fond of music, came and followed the ship till the song was ended.

The Argonauts next came to the Wandering Rocks, which swam about in the sea and were shrouded in thick smoke, through which flames of fire could be seen coming out of crevices in their sides. It seemed as if

it were a sort of amusement to them to give chase to ships and destroy them, and when they had dashed them to pieces, there was the fire ready at hand to burn them up. No ship had ever yet reached home in safety after passing them. But the goddess Hera was unwilling to see the brave heroes on board the Argo perish miserably, so she commanded the nymphs who lived at the bottom of the sea to protect the vessel; these were not wicked nymphs like the Sirens, but kind and friendly to brave heroes. A great splashing was heard in the water, and ever so many nymphs came up from the bottom of the sea, each one more beautiful than the last. They swam round the ship, and when one of the rocks came towards her from the right, meaning to crush her, they pushed her away to the left, and when a rock came from the left, they pushed the ship to the right, and they did it so fast that the rocks could not overtake her. This amused them very much, and they laughed out merrily whenever the rocks shot past them. Soon the Argonauts were again out in the open sea, and they thanked the nymphs many times for their help. Then the nymphs went back to their homes at the bottom of the sea.

After rowing for a long time, the heroes came to the island of Crete. They would have liked to go on shore, but there was an iron watchman who refused to allow any one to land without the king's express permission. His name was Talos, and he had been made out of iron by the blacksmith-god Hephaestus, who gave him to Minos the king of Crete. Minos used him as a watchman, and made him run round the

whole island three times every day and drive away any strangers who might approach it. He was all iron, excepting a single vein that ran from his head right down to his feet, and was fastened underneath with iron nails which held in the life blood that ran through the vein and kept him alive. When Talos saw the ship full of heroes coming, he stood still and threw great stones at her. It would have been of no use for the Argonauts to shoot spears and arrows at him in return, for he could not be wounded; so Medea called out to him over the water, 'Talos, if you will be kind to us and let us land, I will show you how you may become immortal.' Talos was pleased at this, and he began to make friendly grimaces, and shouted back his answer in a voice that came out of his iron body like the sound of a great trumpet. He said, 'First tell me how I may become immortal, and then I will let you land.' But Medea answered him deceitfully, and she called back, 'Draw out the nail that is in your foot, and all that is mortal in you will flow out.' Talos believed her, and he sat down on the shore and drew out the nail with some difficulty, for it had been well hammered in. Then the red blood flowed out, and Talos was glad, for he thought it was his mortality which was leaving him; but he became weaker and weaker, and when the last drop of blood had flowed out of his body, he was dead, and there was nothing left but a cold lump of iron. The Argonauts could now sail to the land without hindrance, and they clambered down out of the ship and hunted some wild animals, which they cooked and made a feast of, on the shore.

The Argonauts sailed from Crete to Greece without

stopping, for the gods gave them favourable winds, and when at last they came in sight of the Grecian coast, they all rejoiced greatly at seeing their beloved country again. They landed at that part of it which is called the Isthmus, and is the road between the peninsula of Peloponnesus and the rest of Greece, and there they drew the Argo up on to the shore. The brave ship had been beaten against many a rock, and had been so long in deep water that she was covered with green slime. The Argonauts said that she should never be used for any other journey, and they dedicated her to the sea-god Poseidon as a thank-offering to him for having brought them home in safety. She remained for a very long time standing on the Isthmus, and every one who went by, looked at her and thought of the many dangers and difficulties that the Argonauts had passed through. At last however, the Sacred Beam died, and soon afterwards the Argo herself fell to pieces, for the boards of which she was made had become quite rotten.

5. *Medea's Revenge.*

When the heroes arrived in Greece, they separated and returned to their own homes, and Jason and Medea went to Iolcus where king Pelias lived. Pelias had thought that it would be quite impossible for Jason ever to return, because of all the dangers he would meet with in going to fetch the Golden Fleece, and he had killed his brother, Jason's father, for fear he should in some way avenge the death of his son,—so that when the young hero walked into the palace with the Golden Fleece hanging over his arm, the king turned red and pale by

turns. Jason did not know as yet of the injury that Pelias had done him; but when he went to his father's house he found it empty, and the people told him that his father had been killed by order of the king. Jason was very sad at hearing this, and could no longer take any pleasure in the thought of all the great deeds he had done; but Medea told him not to grieve, for she would avenge the wrong he had suffered. She thought, too, that if Pelias were dead, Jason would be the king of Iolcus and she the queen, and she advised Jason to dissemble, and behave as if he had forgiven the king, whilst she herself went every day to the palace and made friends with his daughters. One day she told them that if they had spirit enough to venture on it, they could make their old father young again, though his hair was already white and his face was covered with wrinkles. The princesses would not believe Medea, but she said she would prove it, and she took an old ram and slew him, and cut him up into several pieces, and laid the pieces in a great caldron of boiling water, and when she had poured a magic juice over them, a young lamb jumped out of the caldron, and no trace of the ram could be seen. Then the girls believed Medea, and begged her to give them the magic juice with which to make their old father young again; but Medea gave them instead, a liquid, which looked just like it, but which had no power whatever. The king's daughters did not delay a single day, but the next time their father was asleep, they went to him and killed him, and one struck off his head, while the others cut the rest of his body into pieces. They had a huge caldron standing ready on the fire, into which they threw the pieces,

and then they poured over them the liquid that Medea had given them, expecting to see their father come out a young man. But Pelias was dead, and dead he remained. The princesses watched the caldron for a long time, but at last they were obliged to give up all hope, and then they broke out into bitter wailing and rushed about the streets with dishevelled hair, crying out that Medea had deceived them and made them kill their father without knowing what they were doing. The people had not cared for Pelias because he had been a cruel and severe man, but they would not sanction the treachery by which he had come to his end, and instead of choosing Jason for their new king, they chose the son of Pelias, so that things turned out very differently from Medea's expectations, and she and Jason had to leave the country.

They went to the city of Corinth, where King Creon ruled. He received them with open arms, for he had heard of Jason's brave deeds and was glad that he had come to live in his country, and he gave him a beautiful house with meadows and vineyards and orchards all round it. Jason and Medea lived there in peace for ten years, and the gods sent them two children whom Medea loved dearly; they were the first human beings she had ever really cared for. But the king had a daughter named Glauce, who was only a child when Jason first went to Corinth but had now grown up to be a very beautiful maiden, and Creon was anxious that she should marry a noble hero, for she was his only child, and her husband would be king of Corinth after his death and would inherit all his riches. And as Jason pleased him well, he said to him that if he would

get rid of Medea, he would give him his daughter Glauce for his wife. Jason no longer cared for Medea as he had once done, because she was of a gloomy, discontented nature, and he thought that if he were rich, he could make up to her for the wrong he would do her by taking another wife. So he told the king that he would agree to his proposal, and he said to Medea that he would give her a great deal of gold and silver, and the most beautiful dresses that could be made, and that she should never want for anything, but live just as if she were the richest queen in the world. He also told her that he was making this new marriage for the sake of his children, in order that they might have a king for their father. Medea was very angry about it in her heart, but she pretended to agree, and when the day came on which the marriage was to be celebrated, she gave Jason a magnificent robe and begged him to take it to Glauce as a present from herself. Jason took it without any suspicion, and Glauce was very much pleased with it and went into her bedchamber to put it on for the wedding. But the robe had been dipped in a poisonous juice, and as soon as it became warm it burst out into flames. Glauce could not tear it off, and she screamed for help; her father and Jason came running to try and put out the fire, but nothing they could do was of any use, and Glauce perished miserably. Creon threw himself upon the dead body of his daughter and tore his hair and wept bitterly; but Jason drew his sword and rushed home to kill Medea. But as he came near the house, he looked up at the sky and saw a chariot drawn by two winged dragons, in which Medea was driving away. Medea had purposed to kill her two

children before she went, because of the pain which she knew this would cause Jason; but when she had taken up the dagger, the children, who did not know what was in her mind, stood looking at her with their pretty blue eyes, and she had not the heart to carry out her intention, but caught them up in her arms and covered them with kisses, and then fled away in the enchanted chariot.

XXVIII.

THESEUS

THERE was a great and famous city in Greece called Athens, about which, when it was first built, there arose a strife between the sea-god Poseidon and the wise goddess Athene, as to which of them should be its protector, for the Greek cities were each under the special care and guardianship of some god or goddess. As they could not agree about it, the other gods said that they must each bring a present to the city, and that it should belong to whichever of them gave it the best present. The gods assembled one day in the fortress, which had been built on a hill in the middle of the city.[1] Poseidon struck the ground with his trident and out sprang a noble animal which was the first horse that had ever been seen, and the gods admired the beautiful creature very much. Then it was the turn of Athene, and she brought forth the olive tree, which bears the olives from which oil is made, and explained how the fruit could be made use of. After this the gods gave their judgment, and they said:—'This is such a stony land that the citizens would find the noble horse of little service, for the horse cannot go well

[1] This fortress was afterwards called the Acropolis of Athens.

over uneven ground, but the olive-tree would flourish, and would be useful to the citizens in many ways.' So the city was placed under the guardianship of Athene and was named after her, and the citizens planted olive-trees all over the country and found in these their chief wealth. They took great care of the tree in the fortress from which all the others had sprung, and it outlived its children and its grandchildren. But after many years had passed, the country was invaded by some enemies who laid waste all the beautiful houses and temples and even burnt the sacred olive-tree itself down to the roots. On the next day, however, when all round it there was nothing to be seen but smoking ruins, behold! a new olive-tree had sprung from the ashes of the old one, which grew, and became in time a large tree.

The city of Athens was at one time ruled over by a king named Aegeus, who had a wife but no children. This was a great sorrow to him, but his brother Pallas was very glad of it, for he had fifty sons, and he thought that if Aegeus died without children his sons would inherit the kingdom. After a time however the wife of Aegeus died, and soon afterwards he went to stay with a king who lived in the city of Troezen, which was several days' journey from Athens; there he was secretly married to the king's beautiful daughter Aethra, and his great wish was fulfilled, for Aethra had a young son. Aegeus would not however take him back to Athens with him, for he feared that his brother's sons, the wild Pallantidae, would try to kill him. So he resolved to leave the child to be brought up by his mother in Troezen, and before he set out on

his journey home he buried his sword and his sandals underneath a huge stone, and told Aethra that when the child was strong enough to heave up the stone and take the sword and sandals from under it, he must leave her and come to him at Athens. After this he went back to his kingdom without telling any one that the gods had given him a son. Aethra loved her son very dearly; she named him Theseus, and brought him up with great care, and he grew handsome and strong, and delighted above everything in listening to his mother whilst she told him stories about all the old heroes, and especially about the strong Heracles, who had killed so many monsters and driven away all the robbers out of the land. Theseus did not know who his father was, but when he had become a young man and the down was beginning to grow upon his chin, Aethra thought he would be strong enough to lift the stone, and she took him to the place where it lay, and told him that underneath it were the sword and sandals of his father who was Aegeus, the king of Athens. Without much difficulty Theseus heaved up the huge stone, though it had become deeply embedded in the earth; and then Aethra told him that his father was still alive, and that he was to take the sword and sandals and go to him at Athens; and Theseus rejoiced at hearing this, and prepared to set off at once. It was a very dangerous journey from Troezen to Athens for there were many robbers on the way, and the old king wanted to give Theseus a ship, so that he might go by sea with much less risk. His mother also was anxious that he should take the easier journey, but Theseus was a brave

hero, and instead of being afraid of the robbers, he was only eager to meet with them. So they were obliged to let him have his own way, and comforted themselves by praying to the gods to protect him.

Theseus accordingly set out on his journey, and he had not long left Troezen when he came to a savage robber who lurked by the roadside, and who was called the Club-carrier. He had a very ugly face, and was lame, but very strong; and he used to lie on the grass among the trees, and whenever a traveller passed by, he sprang out and struck him down with a heavy iron club which he wielded quite easily, and then he robbed him of his goods. When Theseus came along the road, the robber sprang out to kill him; but Theseus avoided the blow, so that the heavy club struck the earth beside him, and then he wrestled with the robber. He at last succeeded in wrenching the club out of his hand, and then he battered his head with it, so that the Club-carrier died by the same weapon with which he had killed others. This was the first heroic deed that Theseus had performed, and he took the iron club away with him to serve both for a weapon and a trophy.

Soon afterwards he came to a fir-wood, where there lived a robber called the Fir-bender. He was tall and strong, with long bristly hair, and he looked very fierce and wild. It was his delight to seize travellers and torture them cruelly: he used to bend two flexible fir-trees down to the ground, and tie each of the traveller's feet to one of these trees, and then he let them spring apart, and broke out into a hideous laugh when he saw the body torn in two and one half hanging to each of the trees. Theseus knew that the robber lived in the

forest, and he went straight to his house. The Fir-bender came out to seize him, but Theseus wrestled with him and threw him. He resolved to punish him with the torture that he had himself devised, and he bent down two young fir-trees and tore the robber's body in two, though he screamed horribly and entreated Theseus to spare him. The Fir-bender had a daughter called Perigune who lived with him in the forest. She was not at all like her father, but was, on the contrary, gentle and good, and she used to tend the plants and flowers that grew near their house. When she saw that Theseus had killed her father, she was afraid and thought he would kill her too, so she hid herself among some large-leaved plants, and said to them, just as if they could understand her, that if they would shelter her she would never pluck any of them again. Theseus looked everywhere for her, but he could not see her on account of the thick leaves. He guessed that she must have hidden herself, and so he called out to her not to be afraid, for he would not do her any harm. His voice sounded so kind that she was encouraged to come out, and they sat and talked together, and Perigune gave him some food, after which Theseus took leave of her and went away. The girl never plucked any flowers from the plants among which she had hidden herself, nor from any others of the same kind, and when she became the wife of a hero she taught her children that they must never do so either, and they in turn brought up their children in the same way, so that no one who was of the race of the robber ever injured any plants of that kind.

Theseus had heard that there was a fierce she-boar

in the neighbourhood that did a great deal of damage, and he resolved that he would rid the people of her. He came upon her footprints in the grass, and followed them till he had tracked her to her den. She started up to kill him with her tusks, and a fierce struggle followed, in which Theseus handled his club valiantly, and at last hit the boar a mighty blow on the head which cracked her skull and made an end of her. Then Theseus wiped the dew from his forehead and continued his journey. His road now lay along a rocky path above the sea, and he presently came to a rock which was the abode of the robber Sciron. He was a strong, powerful man, who amused himself in a very horrible manner. He used to sit on a rock above the sea, blocking up the road so that no one could pass, and he compelled every traveller who came that way to wash his feet, and while they were doing this he kicked them over the cliff, so that they fell down into the sea where there lurked a great tortoise ready to eat them up. Theseus treated the robber just as he had treated others; he was the stronger of the two, and he compelled Sciron to do as he told him, and wash his feet, and then he kicked him over the cliff, and the tortoise seized him by the neck and gobbled him up.

That same evening Theseus reached the house of the wicked Stretcher, whose custom it was to sit before his door and invite travellers to lodge with him for the night. He always fed them sumptuously, but at bed-time he brought out two bedsteads, a big one and a little one, and he took the short people to the big bedstead and killed them by stretching out their limbs till they were as long as the couch, (for which reason he was called the

Stretcher) and the tall people he laid upon the little bedstead and lopped off as much of their limbs as extended beyond it, and then he left them to bleed to death. Theseus behaved as if he did not know about the robber's wicked practices: he ate and drank and carried on a cheerful conversation, but when the robber led him into the sleeping-chamber, Theseus seized him round the body, threw him on to the short bedstead, and then drew his sword and hewed off his legs above the knees; then two great streams of blood gushed forth, and the robber died. Theseus dragged the body out into the open air where it was devoured by wolves, vultures, and ravens, but he himself lay down to rest in the house and slept till the morning, and when the day dawned, he went on his way. The Stretcher was the last robber he met with, and ever after this journey of his, travellers could go from Troezen to Greece without fear of being robbed and killed, and as they journeyed they thought of the young hero Theseus to whom they owed their safety.

Theseus soon afterwards arrived in Athens. He first of all bathed himself in a stream near the city, for he was covered with dust and blood, and when he was cleansed, he entered the town and was conducted to his father's palace. He went in saying that he was a stranger, and begged the king to show him hospitality. Aegeus was now old, and he was very sorrowful, for he thought that his son must be dead and that the wicked Pallantidae would succeed to the kingdom. The witch Medea was with him, for he had received her when she fled from Corinth in her chariot drawn by dragons.[1]

[1] See page 175.

She was wise and crafty in speech, and she had succeeded in gaining so great an influence over the king that he asked her advice in all things, and followed it. No one knew who Theseus was except Medea, but she knew, for she could find out any secret by means of her magic arts. She was not at all pleased that Theseus had come to Athens, for she feared that the king would set greater store by his son than by her, and that her power would now be at an end. So she told Aegeus that the stranger was a kinsman of the Pallantidae, and that he had come for the purpose of killing him. The poor old king believed what she told him and was seized with fear, and he asked her what he had better do to save his life. Medea answered that she would mix some poison with the wine that Theseus was to drink, and Aegeus gave her leave to do so. But while they were at dinner, it happened that Theseus wanted to cut off a piece of roasted meat, and he drew his sword to cut it, for the Greeks had not at that time learnt the use of knives and forks. Then Aegeus recognised the sword, and he sprang up and dashed the goblet from the table; the poisoned wine flowed all over the floor, but Aegeus paid no attention to it, for he had flung his arms round Theseus, and was embracing him and crying out, 'My son, my son.' Both the father and son rejoiced greatly at thus finding each other, and they had many things to ask and to tell, and when Theseus related how he had destroyed the robbers, the joy of the old king was doubled at finding that his son was so brave a hero. Meanwhile he gave no thought to the wicked Medea who had intended to poison Theseus, and she went out and called her dragon-car. It came rushing through

the air towards her, and she got into it and flew away, and has never been seen again.

The old king was quite happy now, and he sent a herald to proclaim all through the city that Theseus was his son and the heir to his kingdom. No one grudged him his happiness except the wicked Pallas and his sons, who till now had been the chief men in the city. They were rich and had a great many servants, and they assembled them all in a little wood near the city, intending to leave some of them there in ambush, and to lead the others towards the city and shout to Theseus to come out and fight them. They thought that he would come out against them with a few men only, and that after the battle had begun, they would be joined by the servants left in the wood which would make the odds very unequal; and they hoped that they would thus be able to kill Theseus, and then go on into the city and murder the old king. But after they had made all their preparations, one of the servants went to Aegeus and revealed the treachery they were planning. Then Theseus went out towards the wood, followed by a number of the citizens, and slew the men who were in ambush there, and when the rest heard that, they were afraid, and fled from the country.

Theseus was anxious to perform some heroic deed which would benefit the Athenians and make them love and honour him. There was at that time a fierce bull in the country who killed men and cattle, and who was called the Bull of Marathon, because he lived near Marathon, which is close to Athens. It was the same beast that had formerly been called the Cretan Bull, and had been brought by Heracles from Crete, at the com-

mand of Eurystheus, as his seventh Labour.[1] Ever since that time the savage bull had been at large in Greece, doing much damage. Theseus went out against him without either sword or club, for he wished to overcome the bull by his own hero-strength alone, and bring him alive to Athens; some of the citizens went with him, but only to look on at a distance. When Theseus came in sight of the bull, he stood still, and the bull rushed at him, bellowing and lowering his head to run his horns into him and toss him up high into the air, as he had tossed many a one before. But Theseus seized him by the horns and dragged him aside, and then a mighty wrestling took place,—the eyes of the young hero glowed like fire, and the veins of his arms were swollen high with the effort he had to make. When they had wrestled for some time, the bull grew tired and tried to get free, but Theseus held him fast and dragged him into the city, and all the Athenians came out to meet him, and they praised him and said that he was like Heracles. Theseus then took the bull to the temple of Apollo to sacrifice him to the god. He cut off the hairs from the animal's forehead, as the custom was, and laid them in the flame of the fire that was burning on the altar and prayed to Apollo, and then he took up the sacrificial axe, and felled the great bull to the ground with a single blow. The sacrifice was then performed in the usual manner, and it was the most splendid animal that had ever been offered to any god. The Athenians were proud of their strong young prince, and they loved and honoured him.

Not long after this, the time came round when the

[1] See page 122.

Athenians were obliged to send their tribute to the king of Crete; it was, indeed, a shameful tribute,—seven youths and seven maidens, who were sent to perish there miserably. Minos, the king of Crete, had had a son named Androgeus, who had once happened to come to Athens just when there was a feast going on, and sports in which all the young men vied with one another in feats of skill and strength; and he had taken part in the sports, and had excelled all others and won the prize of honour. But the Athenians were very angry at his having beaten them, and they lay in wait for him as he was on his way home, and fell upon him and killed him. When his father, King Minos, heard of this, he swore that the Athenians should suffer for it, and he prepared his ships and sailed with a mighty army to fight against Athens. The gods took the part of Minos and sent a pestilence among the Athenians; they also dried up their rivers and spoiled their harvests, so that there was great distress throughout the country. At last the Athenians were obliged to sue for peace, and Minos granted it on condition that every nine years they should give him a tribute of seven youths and seven maidens. There was a wonderful house in Crete where the youths and maidens who were sent as tribute met with a miserable death. The house was called the Labyrinth, and it was as large as a town, and had countless courts and galleries. Those who entered it without being familiar with its passages could never find their way out again, and they hurried from one to another of the numberless rooms looking for the entrance door, but all in vain,—they only became more and more hopelessly lost in the bewildering house, and

at last a monster who lived there, came and ate them up. He was called the Minotaur, and he had the form of a man, excepting his head, which was that of a bull, and he had a bull's voice.

When the time for paying the tribute came round, all the youths and maidens of Athens had to assemble in the market-place. Then two brazen vessels were brought out, and they put a number of balls into each of them; into one vessel they put as many balls as there were youths in the city, and into the other as many balls as there were maidens; seven of the balls in each vessel were black, and all the rest were white. All the youths and maidens in turn had to put their hand into one of the vessels and draw out a ball without looking, and those who drew the black balls had to go on board the ship that was waiting to take them to Crete. For this sorrowful journey the ship always had black sails instead of white ones.

For the third time the Athenians were now obliged to pay the tribute of seven youths and seven maidens to the king of Crete. When Theseus heard about it, he begged his father to let him sail with them, for he hoped that he would be able to kill the monster and deliver the Athenians. The king was afraid that Theseus would never come back, notwithstanding the great deeds he had already performed, and he refused at first to give his consent; but Theseus said that it would be a disgrace to him if he did not go, and he persisted in his request till his father granted it. When the others had been chosen by lot, they all went on board the ship which was ready to sail, and Aegeus and many others went down to the shore to take leave of

them. All were heart-broken at the parting excepting Theseus, but he was in very good spirits, for he hoped this would be the last time that such a journey would have to be made. The old king gave him a white sail which he begged him to hoist if he came back in safety, saying, 'If you are alive when the ship returns, let me know it by this signal; but if on the contrary you have perished, the black sail will tell me the sad news as soon as the ship comes in sight.' Theseus promised to do as his father wished, and then he went on board the vessel and gave the signal to the sailors, who plied their oars and pushed off from the land. And Aegeus returned home and prayed to the gods to bring his son back to him in safety.

After some time the voyage came to an end, and the ship with the black sails arrived in Crete. Minos sent his soldiers to conduct the youths and maidens to a dungeon where they were to remain till the next day, and as they passed through the streets many people crowded to look at them, lamenting that the young lives should be sacrificed. The procession went past the palace gate where King Minos was standing with his daughter Ariadne, who was a very beautiful girl. When Ariadne saw Theseus she could not help gazing at him, for she thought he looked more like a true hero than any one she had ever seen, though many heroes came to her father's court. She could not bear to think that he must perish, and all night long, when every one else was asleep, she lay awake on her couch thinking how she could save him. In the morning she watched for an opportunity and went to the prison, where she had no difficulty in getting in because she was the

king's daughter. She called Theseus apart, and told him that she loved him and longed to save him, and she gave him a ball of thread and said that he must secretly fasten one end of it to the entrance of the Labyrinth and unravel it as he went along, so that he might be able to find his way out again. She also gave him a sharp sword which she had taken from her father's armoury, that he might be armed for his struggle with the Minotaur. Theseus thanked the beautiful Ariadne, and told her that he was the son of the king of Athens, and that if he escaped in safety from the Labyrinth he would take her home with him to be his wife. She willingly consented to this, and then left the prison, and soon afterwards the guards came to take the prisoners to the Labyrinth; they did not see the sword and the ball of thread which Ariadne had given to Theseus, for he had hidden them in his robe. When they reached the Labyrinth they led the prisoners a long way into it and then left them, thinking that they would never find their way out again, for they did not notice that Theseus had unfastened his ball at the entrance and let the thread pass through his fingers as he went along. When the guards had turned back, the youths and maidens thought they would have to wander about hopelessly until the Minotaur came and devoured them, but Theseus spoke to them encouragingly, and said that by the help of the gods he would slay the monster and bring them out of their trouble. About mid-day they heard the monster bellowing in the distance; he was still some way from them, but he scented human blood, and as he came nearer his bellowing grew louder and louder. The

others crowded together in a corner, each wanting to be the last to meet him, but Theseus stood forward in the middle of the room with his naked sword raised, waiting for his approach. He was as tall again as a man, and he had powerful fists and a huge mouth, and on his head were two great horns. He stretched out his arm to seize Theseus and opened his mouth to bite off his head, but Theseus sprang behind him and hewed off one of his legs at the knee joint, and then the huge giant fell down and bellowed until the walls shook with the noise he made. Theseus measured with his eye to see where his heart must be, and taking careful aim, he stabbed him through the back at that place. A great stream of blood gushed out, and the monster lay on the ground groaning and moaning and beating about wildly with his arms; he did not hit any one, however, and before long he was dead. The youths and maidens all came round Theseus, and they fell down and kissed his feet and hands. They waited till it was dark, and then set out to leave the Labyrinth, Theseus going in front and winding up the ball of thread as he went. They passed through room after room and court after court, till at last they reached the door, where they found Ariadne waiting for them; she had stolen away from the palace, and was full of joy when she saw them arrive. Then they all went together to the ship, which at once put out to sea, and by daybreak they were already far away. King Minos thought his daughter must have been carried off by robbers, for it never occurred to him that she could have sailed away with the prisoners whom he believed to have been devoured by the Minotaur, and he searched for her all over the island. When he

heard, some time afterwards, what had really happened, he was so amazed at the bravery of Theseus that he never again ventured to demand the tribute from the Athenians.

When Theseus and his companions had sailed for some days, they came to the island of Naxos, and as it was evening, they went ashore to sleep. Naxos was the favourite country of Dionysus, the wine-god; he often used to stay in the island, and he caused the finest vines to grow there. Theseus and his companions slept on the shore, and towards morning, Dionysus appeared to Theseus in a dream and said to him, 'Rise up and return home at once with your friends, but leave Ariadne behind you, for I myself have chosen her to be my wife.' Theseus awoke very sorrowful at having to leave the beautiful Ariadne, but he knew that he must do as the god commanded, and he roused his companions and told them his dream, and then they went softly down to the ship and sailed away, leaving Ariadne asleep on the island. When it was bright daylight, Ariadne awoke and found herself alone. She sprang up and ran down to the shore, and seeing the ship some way out at sea, she thought they had forgotten her, and waved her veil as a signal for them to come back. The ship's crew saw her, but they sailed on all the same, and then Ariadne sat down on the shore and wept bitterly, for she thought that Theseus had abandoned her because he did not love her, and that she was left to perish in misery and distress. As she sat thus weeping, with her beautiful head resting on her hand, and with her mind full of sad thoughts, she heard a sound of flute-playing on the island, which came nearer and nearer, and a

crowd of men and women appeared before her in a strange procession. The foremost was a marvellously beautiful youth, who had a crown of vine-leaves on his head, and drove in a golden chariot drawn by two spotted panthers. The youth was Dionysus, and he went up to Ariadne and said, 'Do not be afraid; I am the god who created the vine, and I love you, and am going to make you my wife.' The marriage was celebrated that very day, and all the woods and valleys in the island resounded with sweet music; the Bacchantes danced and sang, and the old Silenus who had taken care of Dionysus in his childhood[1] was intoxicated the whole day long by way of doing honour to his master. Ariadne was now the wife of the god Dionysus, and she became immortal, and was gifted with perpetual youth.

The ship that carried away Theseus soon reached Athens, but Theseus was so absorbed in thoughts of Ariadne that he forgot to hoist the white sails which were to announce his safe return. The aged Aegeus had passed many long hours since his son had left him in sitting on a high rock from which he could see far over the sea. At last he spied a sail coming towards him, but when it approached a little nearer, he saw that it was a black one. Then he thought that the ship was returning without Theseus, and he threw himself over into the sea because he could not bear to live any longer. Some of the people who were on the shore saw what he had done, and they at once got into a boat and sailed to the place where he had disappeared, hoping to save him; but they were too late, for when they found him he was already dead. They laid the

[1] See page 65.

corpse on a bier, and were standing sadly round it when the ship came sailing in. The youths on board raised a shout of joy at reaching their home again, but the others beckoned to them to be silent, and pointed to the corpse. When Theseus knew that his father had killed himself at the sight of the black sail, he was very much distressed, and he threw himself upon the corpse shedding bitter tears. In the evening the Athenians carried the bier to the palace, and the next day they raised a funeral pyre, and when they had burnt the body, they placed the ashes in a costly urn. Theseus sorrowed long for his father, and bitterly regretted that he had not remembered the white sail at the right time.

Theseus was now king, and he ruled over the city of Athens for a great number of years, and performed many brave deeds. The Athenians had never before had such a noble hero for their king, and they lived in peace and safety, for their enemies feared Theseus and did not dare to attack them. It happened once, that in sailing along the coast of Asia, Theseus arrived at the country of the Amazons,—a nation of warlike women,—[1] one of whom was standing on the shore when Theseus landed. She was so beautiful that he determined to carry her off to be his wife, but the Amazons never welcomed strangers, and when Theseus went up to her she raised her lance, intending to pierce him with it. Theseus however was not afraid, and putting his arms round the maiden, he carried her off to the ship and his comrades rowed away as fast as they could. The other Amazons came running down to the shore when they heard the cries of their sister, but they could not

[1] See page 125.

overtake the ship. The Amazon that Theseus had carried off was named Hippolyta. At first she was very angry with him, but soon she came to love him with all her heart and had no wish to go home again. When they reached Athens, Hippolyta became the wife of Theseus, and the gods sent them a little son whom they named Hippolytus. Hippolyta was now queen of Athens; but the Amazons had made up their minds to deliver their sister and punish the stranger who had run away with her, and they took ship and sailed to Greece. It was a strange sight to see women with helmets on their heads and shields at their sides, managing the vessels; and when they came to Greece every one was afraid of them. They did not know who it was that had carried off their sister, so they made inquiries; and when they found it was Theseus, they set out for Athens, and as soon as they entered his dominions they began to lay waste the corn-fields and kill both men and women. Some of the people escaped, however, and hastened to the city to warn the king that the Amazons were marching towards it, and he armed his people and led them out to the fight. Then a fierce battle took place, and many of the Athenians were killed. Queen Hippolyta stood on the wall of the city watching the battle, full of anxiety lest Theseus should be killed by the Amazons, and she longed so much to help him that at last she armed herself with a spear and shield, and went out to take part in the fray. The Amazons thought at first that she had come to join them, but when they found out what was the real state of the case they became furious. They were now more angry with her than with Theseus, and they hurled their lances at her till one of them hit her in

the breast, and she sank down and died. Theseus was standing by her, and when he saw that she was dead, he was seized with uncontrollable fury, and he struck down one after another of the Amazons until they were all killed. It was a great victory, and the first that any one had ever gained over the Amazons, but Theseus could take no pleasure in it because of the loss of Hippolyta.

There was a nation in Greece called the Lapithae, whose king, Pirithoüs, was a brave and noble hero. He had heard so much about Theseus that he resolved to try whether he was as much of a hero as every one said. So he entered his country and stole some cattle and carried them away. When Theseus heard of it, he set out in pursuit of Pirithoüs, who took no pains to escape from him, but rather the contrary, for he had stolen the cattle, not for the sake of having them, but because he wanted to see what Theseus would be like when he was angry. When Theseus overtook him, Pirithoüs marvelled at his strength and beauty and at the fire of his eyes which were glowing with impatience for the fight, and Theseus on his part was so delighted with the brave and manly appearance of Pirithoüs that he quite forgot that he had been angry with him. Pirithoüs went up to him holding out his hand, and said, 'I will atone for the theft I have committed; you may impose upon me whatever punishment you will.' Theseus gave him his hand in return, and said that he would impose no punishment, but would rather make a sacred friendship with him. They promised each other that they would be as brothers, and would always be ready to stand by one another, and called upon Zeus

to witness their oaths and bless their friendship, and then they returned, each to his own country.

Some time after this, Pirithoüs invited a number of guests to celebrate his marriage with a beautiful princess, and the most honoured of all the guests was Theseus. All the great men among the Lapithae were at the wedding, and also the savage Centaurs, who had the lower part of their bodies formed like the bodies of horses. But when the fierce Centaurs became intoxicated, they tried to run away with the bride of Pirithoüs and the other women, and the marriage feast ended in a bloody fight. The vessels that had been used at the feast served for arms, and they threw goblets, dishes, and drinking cups at one another. The Centaurs were stronger than the Lapithae, and would certainly have gained the victory if the Lapithae had not had the help of Theseus, who had brought his iron club with him and struck down the Centaurs with it, till the dead bodies of those whom he had killed lay upon the ground in heaps and the few that remained took to flight. Then peace was restored, though not before a great number of the Lapithae had perished, and Theseus returned home, glad that he had been able to give this proof of his friendship for Pirithoüs.

Theseus was always ready to help those who were in the right, and as his fame spread far and wide, every one who was oppressed came to Athens and stood before the Altar of Pity which had been raised in the centre of the market-place. Then Theseus inquired into his case, and if he found that he had been wronged, he took care to see that justice was done. This gained for him the hatred of the wicked oppressors, but all those who cared for justice honoured and loved him.

Theseus had reigned for a long time, and his son Hippolytus had grown up to be a man, when he resolved to marry again, and asked Minos the king of Crete to let him have his daughter Phaedra, the sister of Ariadne, for his wife. Minos had long before this forgiven Theseus for having killed the Minotaur and carried off Ariadne, and he willingly consented to give him his younger daughter in marriage. Phaedra was many years younger than Theseus and had been quite a child when he was in Crete, but she now became queen of Athens, and Theseus loved her dearly and did all he could to please her. His son, who had been named Hippolytus after his mother, did not live at Athens, but in Troezen with his grandmother who had brought him up since the death of Hippolyta. He was noble and virtuous, and he loved the chase and all manly pursuits, and honoured, above all other gods and goddesses, the huntress-goddess Artemis. Hippolytus came one day to Athens on a visit, and when Phaedra saw him, she was so dazzled by his youth and beauty that she began to love him passionately, and after his return she used to spend many hours every day sitting on the city walls and looking towards Troezen. She used to take her old nurse there with her, and talk to her about Hippolytus, and tell her how willingly she would give up honour and riches for his sake. The next time Hippolytus came to Athens she had a secret conversation with him, and begged him to flee away and take her with him to be his wife. But Hippolytus was angry with her for plotting such treachery against his father, and he was so shocked at what she had said that he mounted his chariot and drove his spirited horses

back towards Troezen. Phaedra now hated him for having spurned her, and she thought of a plan by which she might revenge herself upon him. She went to Theseus and told him with many tears that Hippolytus had proposed to her to run away with him and become his wife, and Theseus believed what she told him, and he was very, very angry, and said that Hippolytus should atone for it with his life.

Theseus was loved by the gods, and especially by Poseidon the sea-god, who had once promised him that if ever he prayed to him in any time of trouble, he would certainly grant his request, whatever it might be. Many years had passed away since then, and Theseus had never had so great a desire for anything as to think of asking the sea-god for it; but now that Phaedra accused his son of this great crime, he entreated Poseidon to fulfil his dearest wish and cause Hippolytus to die immediately. At that moment, Hippolytus who was driving along the sea-shore, saw the waves suddenly part asunder and a hideous monster come out of them, who roared horribly. The frightful appearance of the monster and the noise he made, rendered the horses quite unmanageable, and Hippolytus could not hold them in. They ran away with the chariot, dragging it over stones and rocks, till at last it was upset, and Hippolytus was thrown out and trampled to death. The people found his body and brought it to Athens, and Theseus knew that Poseidon had granted his prayer. But when Phaedra saw the corpse, she was so grieved and sick at heart that she went into her sleeping chamber and hanged herself, and then the old nurse told the king the whole truth. When Theseus knew

that his innocent son had perished because of his virtue, he was quite overcome with grief, and threw himself upon the corpse, kissing it and weeping passionately, and for many days he shut himself up alone in his palace and refused either to eat or drink.

Theseus thought that the best way of regaining his spirits would be to undertake some new exploit which would give a fresh turn to his thoughts. The wife of Pirithoüs was also dead, and the two heroes determined to set out together to seek for two beautiful women whom they might carry off to become their wives. They had heard that Tyndareus, the king of Sparta, had a lovely daughter named Helena, and they set out for Sparta, and reached it just at the time of the festival of Artemis. The maidens of the city kept the festival by dancing round the altar of the goddess, and Helena was among them, and was distinguished from all the others by her marvellous beauty. The two heroes rushed in among the maidens and seized Helena, and when they had carried her off to a place of safety, they cast lots for her, to see whose wife she should be. The lot fell to Theseus, and he took her to his mother Aethra and begged her to take care of the maiden until he should return for her, for he wanted to go and help his friend also to carry off a wife by force. They were so bold as to resolve that they would descend into the Land of Shades and steal away the queen of the Lower World, although this was an undertaking so daring that nothing like it had ever before been attempted by any hero. They passed through the chasm which was the entrance to the Lower World, and went down far below the earth till at last they reached the Land of

Shades. They were now very tired, and as they expected to have a hard struggle before they could get possession of the queen, they thought they would rest a little first, and sat down on a stone which they saw near them. But when they wanted to get up again, they found that they had stuck fast to the stone and could not move. The king of the Lower World, who knew for what purpose they had dared to come into his dominions, had prevented their getting up again, and he punished them by obliging them to sit there for ever.

So the two heroes were kept prisoners in the Lower World; and meanwhile, the brothers of Helena, whose names were Castor and Pollux, set out to free their sister. Their mother was the beautiful Leda, wife of King Tyndareus, who was sitting one day by the river bank when a snow-white swan came sailing by. Leda was charmed with his beauty and called him to come to her, and the swan came on shore and embraced her. It was not a real swan however, but Zeus, who loved the beautiful Leda, and had come to her in this form. Some time after this, Leda had four children; there were two large eggs, and out of each egg there came a little boy and a little girl. Two of them were the children of Zeus, and their names were Pollux and Helena; the other two were called Castor and Clytaemnestra. When they grew up, the two brothers, Castor and Pollux, became glorious heroes. No one understood so well how to tame wild horses as Castor, and no one was so skilled in wrestling as Pollux.[1] They were also kind and gentle, and loved one another so dearly that they shared everything, and they performed

[1] See page 157.

many heroic deeds together, and won great fame. But in the course of time, Castor died and passed into the Lower World, where he became an unthinking shade. Pollux did not die, for it was decreed that as he was a son of Zeus he should become immortal and live among the gods: ' But his immortality was a burden to him, for he could not bear to live without his brother, and he begged his father Zeus to grant them both the same fate, so that they might either be both in Olympus or both in the Lower World. Zeus was pleased at their love for one another, and he said that they should both be in Olympus one day and both be in the Lower World on the alternate day, and thus they should always remain together. The two brothers were named the Dioscuri, or the children of Zeus, and two bright stars which stand close to one another in the sky are named after them.

At the time however when Theseus carried off Helena, the brothers were still alive and in the first bloom of their youth. They set out with their companions for Athens, thinking that Theseus must have taken their sister to his capital; but when they reached it they were told that he had gone away on an adventurous enterprise, and the Athenians took a solemn oath that the maiden was not within their walls. The brothers asked where she was hidden, and one of the citizens who knew, told them; then they went away without doing any harm to any one, and marched to Troezen, where they compelled Aethra to let them take their beautiful sister home with them.

Theseus and Pirithoüs sat upon the stone for many years, until the time came when Heracles was com-

manded by Eurystheus to descend into the Lower World and fetch up the three-headed dog Cerberus.[1] When the captive heroes saw him, they called to him and told him of their trouble, and begged him to help them. Then Heracles seized the hand of Theseus with such a mighty grasp that the stone was compelled to leave go and allow him to get up. He next seized hold of Pirithoüs, but at that moment the earth quaked, and fearful sounds were heard, which signified that the gods would not grant freedom to Pirithoüs, but doomed him to sit upon the stone for ever, because he had presumed to desire the queen of the Lower World for his wife.

So Theseus was obliged to leave his friend in the Land of Shades, and he took leave of him and returned to the Upper World; but in the meanwhile his hair had turned grey, and his appearance had become very much altered. Now while he was a prisoner in the Lower World, a mischief-making person had been telling the people that their king spent all his time in going about on daring expeditions, and was of no use to his subjects; so when Theseus came back to Athens, he found that the people had no longer any affection or esteem for him. He would not live amongst those who did not make him welcome, and he left his country and got into a ship and sailed to the island of Scyros. Part of the island belonged to a king named Lycomedes, but the rest of it belonged to Theseus, and he had resolved to spend the remaining days of his life there, so he went to the king and told him so. The king was by no means pleased, for he was a cowardly man and he thought that Theseus would not leave him in peaceful

[1] See page 135.

possession of his share, but would make himself king of the whole island. He pretended, however, to welcome Theseus, and said that he would take him to a mountain where he would have a view of the whole country They both climbed up the mountain, which had a steep precipice on one side of it, and when Theseus was preoccupied in looking at the country, Lycomedes got behind him and pushed him over the cliff. Theseus died from the great fall, and thus the strong hero lost his life at the hands of one cowardly man. They found his body lying at the foot of the precipice with the bones broken, and they buried him in the island.

Many years passed away, and the age of the heroes and the sons of the gods had quite gone by, when the Athenians sent one day to the Oracle at Delphi to inquire of the Pythia about the future. The Pythia told them that they had better fetch the bones of Theseus from Scyros and keep them in their city, because these bones would prove a great blessing to them. They did not fail to attend to this direction, and sent ships manned with a large number of Athenians to the island of Scyros, to seek for the bones of Theseus and bring them home. But no one could tell them where the grave of the hero was, for during that long time it had been forgotten. They went all over the island seeking for it, and at last it was revealed to them by a sign from heaven: a mighty eagle swooped down on to a hill and pecked the ground many times with his beak, then he soared up again and disappeared among the clouds. The Athenians dug into the hill and found a coffin containing bones much larger than the bones of the men of that time, and

there was also a sword and spear in the same coffin. They knew by the sign that had been given them from heaven that these were the bones of Theseus, and they carried the coffin to their finest ship and sailed home with it. The ship was beautifully adorned with garlands and streamers, and when it reached Athens the citizens put on their best clothes and came out to meet it, singing and playing on the flute, just as if it were Theseus himself who was returning to his country. They buried his bones in the middle of the city, and consecrated the spot as a Refuge or place of safety: if, for example, a slave were pursued by his master and he could succeed in reaching the tomb of Theseus, the master had no longer any right to touch him. In this manner the Athenians honoured the memory of Theseus, who during his lifetime had always been so ready to take the part of the weak against the strong They also came in time to look upon him as a god, and offered sacrifices to him.

XXIX.

OEDIPUS.

THERE was once a king of Thebes called Laïus, and he had a wife whose name was Jocasta. There was also a soothsayer in Thebes, who said that if the queen had a son it would be a great misfortune, for that when he grew up, he would kill his father and marry his mother. Some time afterwards the queen had a little son, a strong child with bright merry eyes; but Laïus determined to kill it in order to prevent the prediction of the soothsayer from coming true, and he told one of his servants to take the little child to a mountain called Cithaerón, which was covered with forests, and leave it there to be devoured by wild beasts; but before he sent it away, the king tied a string tightly round its ankles, which made the little feet swell. The servant did as he was told, and left the child lying in the forest. But it happened that the cattle of Polybus, the king of Corinth, were at that time pasturing on the mountain, and one of the herdsmen who was in charge of them, chanced, in searching for a cow that had gone astray, to go through the forest and to pass by the spot where the child of King Laïus had been left to perish. He was sorry for the poor little thing, and he took it up and untied the string round its feet, and laid cooling

herbs upon the sore places. King Polybus and his wife had no child, though they wished very much for one, and the herdsman, who knew this, thought that they might like to have the little stranger to bring up as their own son. He took the beautiful little boy to Corinth and showed him to the king and queen, who were very much pleased, and they said they would keep him for their own, and told the herdsman not to let any one know that he had found him in the forest. So Laïus thought that his child had been devoured by wild beasts, while the Corinthians thought that the gods had granted the wish of their queen and had sent her a child, and nobody, not even the king and queen themselves, knew that he was the son of Laïus and Jocasta. The child's feet were still swollen when he was brought to Corinth, so they called him Oedipus, which means Swollen-Foot.

Oedipus grew up to be brave and strong, and the king and queen, who were very fond of him, treated him just as if they were his real parents and never told him that he had not been born in Corinth. When he was a young man, he went one day to Delphi to ask the Oracle what would happen to him, and the priestess answered, 'You will kill your father and marry your mother.' Oedipus shuddered, and resolved to leave Corinth at once that he might never fulfil such a horrible prediction. He ordered his chariot, and let his horses take whichever road they pleased, for he did not care where he went, so long as it was away from Corinth. By-and-by he came to a strange country, and found himself in a narrow lane where there was not even room for two chariots to pass one another, and whilst

he was still in this narrow lane, he met a king who was coming in his chariot from the opposite direction. The king commanded Oedipus to stand aside and let him pass in such a haughty manner that Oedipus refused to obey him, and after they had exchanged some angry words, they seized their arms, and Oedipus before long struck the king a deadly blow. The king was Laïus, the father of Oedipus, and thus a part of the Oracle was already fulfilled; but Oedipus did not know this, and he did not feel at all sorry for having killed the stranger, as it was he who had begun the quarrel. He went on through Greece and accomplished many brave deeds, and after some time he came to the neighbourhood of Thebes, where he heard a strange story indeed.

On the mountain near Thebes, there was a monster called the Sphinx, who could speak. She devoured both men and cattle, and no one had been able to overcome her. She asked every one who came near her a riddle which she had learnt from the Muses, who are the goddesses of song, and she devoured every one who could not answer it; but it had been decreed by fate that if any one should ever succeed in guessing it, she would be obliged to throw herself down from the mountain and die. Many people had already tried to do so, but they had all failed and had been devoured by the Sphinx in consequence, so that no one else would attempt it, and there was no end to the misery in the land. The Thebans met together to consider what could be done, and they agreed that if any one would answer the riddle and deliver the city from the monster, he should, as a reward, be made king of Thebes, and have Jocasta for his wife. King Laïus had been found

dead in the narrow lane some time before, but it was not known who had killed him.

When Oedipus heard that the Thebans had agreed to give the kingdom to any one who would deliver them from the Sphinx, he said to himself, 'I dare not return to my father's country, and I will therefore seek to win a kingdom for myself,' for he still thought that his father was the king of Corinth. So he set out for the mountain where the Sphinx lived. She was like a gigantic lioness, with a woman's head, and powerful wings growing out of her shoulders, and all round her lay the bones of the men whom she had devoured. It was a horrible sight, but Oedipus was not afraid, and he desired her to tell him the riddle. Then she began to sing, 'There is a creature of wondrous kind; at first it goes on four legs, then on two, and at last it uses three. There is none like it among all those that walk on the earth, or swim in the water, or fly in the air.' Oedipus put his hand to his forehead and thought for a while. Then it came into his mind that as a little child, man crawls about on four legs, and that in his old age he uses a stick, which is just like a third leg, and he said, 'The wonderful creature is man.' As soon as the words had passed his lips, the Sphinx threw herself from the mountain, and fell down dead into the valley below. The Thebans, who were watching from the city, saw what happened, and they came out to meet Oedipus with shouts of joy. They hailed him as their king and led him into the palace, and on the same day he was married to Queen Jocasta. Thus he became the husband of his mother, and the whole of the prophecy was fulfilled. But he did not know this, and was very happy.

He lived in great riches, and to all seeming, in great honour, so that there was no one who did not look upon him as a very fortunate man.

Many years had passed away, when there came a messenger to Thebes to tell Oedipus that King Polybus was dead, and to beg him to return to Corinth and be king of the city. But Oedipus would not return there on account of the Oracle, for though King Polybus, whom he believed to be his father, was dead, the queen was still alive, and he feared that some madness might come over him and make him desire to marry his mother. He told this to the messenger, who, as it happened, was the old herdsman who had found Oedipus in the forest when he was a child; and he, thinking to do the king a great service, told him in return that he was not the son of Polybus, but a strange child who had been found on Mount Cithaeron with his feet tied together by a string. As soon as Jocasta heard this, she knew that Oedipus must be her son, and when he began to inquire about his father, he found that he must have been the king whom he had killed in the narrow lane. All his prosperity and all his happiness had now left him at a single blow, and there was not a man in Thebes who did not consider himself better off than the king. He was so wretched that he put out his own eyes because he could not bear to face the contemptuous looks of the Thebans; and as for Jocasta, she went into her bedchamber and hanged herself.

The Greeks believed that the presence of any one who had committed a great crime, even though he had done so unintentionally, made them unholy and brought misfortune upon them, and on account of this, the

Thebans resolved to banish Oedipus from their city. He had two sons who were strong youths and might have protected their father if they had chosen, but they would not interfere, because they wanted to rule over the city themselves. The blind king was led out of the city, but when he came to the gate he turned round and prayed to the gods to punish his sons. He would have been left quite alone to stumble over every stone that lay in his path, if it had not been for one of his daughters, who resolved to share his misery, and who left the beautiful palace in order to take care of her unhappy father in his distress. She was his eldest daughter, and her name was Antigone. She and Oedipus wandered from place to place, living on the food that kind people threw to them, and their couch at night was often beneath the blue sky with a hard stone for their pillow, for the people were afraid to allow the blind king to come into their houses, because of the crimes that he had committed. Antigone suffered from hunger and cold, and her feet were torn and bleeding from the thorns, but she did not think much about that, it was the misery of her father that pierced her heart.

After they had wandered for many years, they came at last to Athens where Theseus, who was always willing to help those who were in trouble was then king. In the middle of the city was the Altar of Pity which he had erected,[1] and Oedipus seated himself on one of the steps of the altar as a sign that he sought for help. Then Theseus came and asked who he was, and when he heard his name, instead of turning away from him

[1] See page 196.

with a shudder as every one else did, he took him by the hand and led him into the palace, where he lived with Antigone during the rest of his life. Before long, however, Oedipus died, and his body was solemnly burnt by the Athenians, for the Oracle said that they must take great care of his ashes, which would prove a blessing to the city.

XXX.

THE SEVEN AGAINST THEBES.

THE sons of Oedipus were twins, and their names were Eteocles and Polynices. When their father was banished from Thebes they succeeded to the kingdom, and agreed that they would each reign in turn for one year. Eteocles had his turn first; but he found it so pleasant to be king that when the year came to an end he refused to give up the sovereignty and drove his brother from the city. Polynices was now an exile; but he determined that he would take no rest till he had found some friends who would promise to help him to revenge himself upon his brother. He set out for Argos, where King Adrastus lived, and arrived there after dark one evening. In the darkness he happened to jostle against another hero who was also going into the palace, and from angry words they soon came to blows, and drew their swords to fight one another. King Adrastus heard the clash of arms from within the palace, and he took a torch and went out to see what was the matter. He commanded the heroes to stop fighting, and asked them what they wanted. Then Polynices explained how he had been driven away from his country by his brother, and how he hoped that the king would help

him to claim his rights. The other hero, whose name was Tydeus, had been driven from his country on account of a murder that he had committed unintentionally, and he had come to request the king to help him to return home again. Whilst the heroes were speaking, the king saw by the light of the torch the shining brazen figures upon their shields. The Greek heroes used to wear various kinds of devices on their shields by which they could be recognised, such as serpents, griffins, eagles, and so forth. Now, on the shield of Polynices there was a lion, and on that of Tydeus a boar's head, and when Adrastus saw these, he remembered that once when he had asked the Oracle to whom he should give his two daughters in marriage, the Oracle had replied, 'To a lion and a wild boar.' Adrastus had not understood the answer at the time, but he now perceived that it must have referred to the two heroes, and he therefore received them kindly, and said that he would give them his daughters in marriage, and restore them to their homes. The wedding soon took place, and Tydeus was married to the elder daughter, and Polynices to the younger.

The king said that he would first help Polynices, and he assembled his soldiers, and summoned several brave heroes to march with them. Three heroes, Capaneus, Hippomedon, and Parthenopaeus, promised to do so, which made six with the king and his two sons-in-law. There was another hero in Argos, named Amphiaraus, who was very wise and could foretell the future, and the king did not like going to war unless he went too, for he was not only brave and fearless, but he always gave good counsel. But when Adrastus summoned

him to march against Thebes, he said he would not go, for he knew that they would not conquer the city, but would all perish excepting Adrastus, who would return alone. Amphiaraus knew this because he could see into the future, but the others did not believe what he said and thought he was afraid of going to the war, and Capaneus, who was a very headstrong man, said, 'If the gods themselves should declare against the expedition, I am resolved to conquer the city in spite of them.' Even Adrastus did not believe that the war would end unhappily, and he said so to Amphiaraus, and pressed him to accompany them. At last it was agreed that Eriphyle, the wife of Amphiaraus, who was also the sister of Adrastus, should decide the matter. There had once been a bitter quarrel between Amphiaraus and Adrastus which had led to their taking arms against each other, and when peace was restored, they had agreed that if ever any dispute should again arise between them, Eriphyle should decide about it, and that whatever she determined should be done. So now Eriphyle had to decide about the going to war. Amphiaraus foresaw that Polynices would try to bribe her and he warned her to take no present from him, and she promised to obey. But Polynices came to her secretly with a beautiful necklace and veil, and said that he would give them to her if she would decide that Amphiaraus should go to the war. These were no ordinary ornaments, but had been given by the god Hephaestus to Cadmus and Harmonia when they celebrated their marriage in the Cadmea,[1] and had been handed down from father to son in the royal family of

[1] See page 58.

Thebes, till they had been worn, last of all, by Queen Jocasta. When Eriphyle saw the glittering necklace and the snow-white veil, she could not overcome her desire to possess them, and although she knew quite well that if she counselled war it would cost her husband his life, she promised to do so; and when the heroes came together to hear her decision, she said, 'Amphiaraus shall go to the war.' Amphiaraus knew that she must have been bribed by Polynices, but he did not dare to make any further difficulty, and accordingly prepared to set out; but before he left the city he called aside his two sons, who were still young boys, and told them that when they were grown up they were to kill their mother because she had decided upon his death.

There were thus seven princes who set out to march against Thebes, and they were accompanied by a goodly band of soldiers, and all except Amphiaraus were merry and in good spirits, for they did not know that they were marching to their death. It was a long journey to Thebes, and they had to travel for several days before they came in sight of it. One day, as they were approaching the city of Nemea, they had to pass through a forest where they met a woman carrying a young child in her arms. The woman was a servant of King Lycurgus, who ruled over the city of Nemea, and it was his child that she was taking care of. Her name was Hypsipele, and her home was in the island of Lemnos, where she had once been a queen herself.[1] The women of Lemnos had killed all the men in the island and formed a kingdom composed entirely of women, and they had made a law that any woman who

[1] See page 153.

should spare even her husband or son and not kill him, should be severely punished. But Hypsipele loved her old father too dearly not to be willing to brave the punishment, and she kept him alive secretly, and used to take him food and talk to him when the others were asleep. This went on for a great many years, but at last the other women found it out, and then they killed the old father, and sold the queen as a slave to some pirates who happened to be sailing past the island at the time. The pirates sold her again in Nemea, and this was how she came to be the slave of King Lycurgus, and the nurse of his child. The heroes were very thirsty, for it was just then mid-day, and they asked Hypsipele if she knew of a spring where they could quench their thirst. She told them that farther down in the valley there was a spring of beautiful clear water, and said that she would show them the way to it. The child was frightened at their shining armour and clanging weapons, so she left it playing on the grass, and went alone with the men. They soon reached the spring and quenched their thirst, and then they returned to the place where they had left the child. But the child was gone, and on a tree close by, there sat a great ugly serpent who had eaten him up. The serpent was soon punished for his wickedness, for one of the heroes pierced him through and through with his lance and killed him, but Hypsipele wept and sobbed, for she felt sure that King Lycurgus would kill her. The heroes were very sorry for her, and they went with her to Nemea in the hope that they might be able to save her from being punished. King Lycurgus thought at first that they were enemies who were coming to attack the

city, but Adrastus explained why they had come, and begged him not to be angry with Hypsipele, as it was really they who were the cause of the child's death. Lycurgus was very sorrowful at hearing about it, so the heroes tried to comfort him, and said that they would honour his child as no child had ever been honoured before, by celebrating magnificent funeral games over its tomb. They took the child out of the snake's body and burnt it on a pyre, and then they put the ashes into a beautiful urn and buried them and heaped up a mound over them. After this they held games near the mound, and vied with each other in all kinds of sports such as heroes take pleasure in. Such games as these were at that time only celebrated in memory of rich and famous kings, and Lycurgus thanked the heroes for honouring his child in this manner. From that time games were celebrated every third year at Nemea, which were called the Nemean Games, and were famed far and wide. Numbers of people came to them from all countries, and whoever did best in any trial of skill received a crown as a prize.

When the funeral festivities were at an end, the heroes took leave of Lycurgus, who promised that for their sake he would not do any harm to Hypsipele. Amphiaraus warned them once again that they had better return home, and said that the death of the child was a bad omen. But when the gods meant to let misfortune overtake people, they blinded their eyes and prevented them from listening to any warning or good counsel, and thus the heroes rejected the advice of Amphiaraus, and continued their march. After some days they came to a mountain from which they could

see Thebes in the distance, and there they halted and held a council, at which it was resolved that before they began the war, Tydeus should go to Thebes and tell Eteocles that he had better give up the kingdom to his brother peaceably, for if he did not, the Argives would take possession of the city by force. Tydeus set out for Thebes, and finding the Theban heroes at a banquet, he delivered his message to them there. Eteocles answered that he hated his brother and would rather die than share the kingdom with him, and that he was not afraid of the Argives, but was quite ready to fight them. On hearing this, Tydeus prepared to return to the camp, but as Eteocles asked him to stay and feast with him, he accepted the invitation, and they talked together in a friendly manner as host and guest, although they were just going to meet one another in deadly conflict. In those days when heroes met they always took the opportunity of vying with one another in feats of strength, and so when the banquet was over, Tydeus challenged the Thebans to wrestle with him. First one presented himself, and then another, but Tydeus was stronger than any of them, and overcame them all. The Thebans were ashamed of themselves and furious with Tydeus, and they placed an ambush of fifty youths in a copse not far from the city, who rushed out and fell upon him as he was returning home. It was an unequal struggle, but Tydeus killed them all except one, who fled back into the city and told the Thebans what had become of the others, and then they wondered still more at the extraordinary strength of Tydeus.

When the princes understood that Eteocles would not give up the kingdom peaceably, they led their army

against the city in order to get possession of it by force. The gates were fastened with strong bars, and on the walls stood the Thebans in arms, prepared to beat off the enemy. There were seven gates in the walls of the city, and Adrastus allotted one gate to each of the princes to attack with his band of followers. The Thebans, on their side, had also placed the seven gates under the special charge of their seven most valiant heroes, each of whom had a band of men to fight under him. Then a fierce battle took place,—the Argives tried to scale the walls by means of ladders, and hurled javelins and arrows at their enemies, while the Thebans rolled great stones to the top of the walls, and just when there were a number of Argives upon one of the ladders and they were hoping that in another moment they would have gained possession of the wall, the Thebans let fall a huge stone, which broke the ladder and crushed to death all those who were upon it. Capaneus was the most impetuous of all the Argives, and wherever he fought the Thebans gave way before him. He set up a ladder against the wall and had climbed almost to the top of it, when, thinking that the city was already in his hands, he looked up at the sky and cried out in a mocking tone, 'The strength of heroes is mightier than the will of the gods.' But as the presumptuous hero raised his foot to place it upon the wall, there came a flash of lightning which destroyed him in a moment, and the Thebans, who were inspired by this with fresh courage, drove back the band of soldiers that he had been leading. All day long the Argives fought against the city, but at last the sun went down, and they were obliged to give over for the time.

The next day Eteocles ascended a tower, and took with him a herald whom he caused to make a proclamation to the Argives in the following words: 'Ye heroes of Argos, Eteocles offers to fight alone with Polynices, on the understanding that whichever of them gets the better of the other shall be king of Thebes.' Polynices on his part was also eager to fight with his brother, and readily accepted the challenge to single combat. Then the Thebans came and encamped outside the city to watch the fight; and the Argives in the plain beyond planted their spears in the ground by their side, thinking they would have no more use for them. Between the two armies was a field, where the brothers were to engage in the deadly struggle. As each of them took his shield and sword from his friends, he eyed the other angrily, longing to begin the fight, and as soon as they were armed they both rushed at one another, each of them so intent on killing his brother that he forgot to cover himself with his shield. And thus, at the same moment, each of the brothers ran his spear through the body of his opponent, and they both sank down dead. But this did not end the quarrel, for the two armies rose up, each desirous of avenging the death of its champion upon the enemy, and a fierce battle took place. Zeus gave the victory to the Thebans, and all the Argives,—heroes and followers alike,—were slain: and thus the prophecy of Amphiaraus was fulfilled. As for the seer himself, he was standing in his war-chariot, urging on his horses that he might not be overtaken by the enemy, when a Theban hero pursued him hotly and gained steadily upon him till he had almost come up with him. But Zeus, who loved Amphiaraus, hurled a

thunder-bolt which clove the ground asunder in front of him, and he sank far down into the earth. It closed over him before the eyes of his pursuer who was thus unable to reach him, and Zeus granted him immortality and took him to live among the gods on Mount Olympus. All the rest of the Argives had by this time perished, excepting only Adrastus. He had a horse, named Arion, who was of divine origin and was swifter than any other horse in the world, so when the king took to flight, the Thebans could not overtake him, and he returned alone to Argos, as Amphiaraus had foretold.

A brother of Jocasta's, whose name was Creon, now became king of Thebes, and he commanded that the fallen Thebans should be buried with great honour, but that Polynices and the Argives should be left unburied on the field of battle, to be food for dogs and vultures. The Greeks believed that those whose bodies were not buried found no rest in the Lower World, and they never offered such an insult as this to the memory of any but their most deadly enemies. A herald went through the city, proclaiming to the Thebans that if any one dared to give burial to Polynices or any of the Argives, he would have to answer for it with his life. Every one was afraid to disobey excepting one, and that one was a woman,—Antigone, the sister of Polynices. She had been very angry with her brothers for casting off their father Oedipus in his time of need, but now that they were dead, she wept for them and could not bear that either of them should be dishonoured. So in the night she went to the field where the corpses lay, and sought for that of her brother. It

was disfigured with dust and blood, but she recognised it, and she covered it over with loose sand and poured out the libations for the dead which consisted of wine, milk, and honey, over the mound. When a corpse had been covered over in this manner and had received the due libations for the dead, the gods accepted it as if it had been properly buried,—so that everything that was necessary had now been done for the corpse of Polynices. But Creon had set watchmen round the field to catch any one who should come to disobey his orders, and just as Antigone had finished her work, the watchmen seized her and took her as a prisoner to Creon, although they were loth to do this, for every one loved the noble maiden. The king was very angry when he heard what she had done, but nevertheless, if she would have consented to admit that she had done wrong in disobeying his orders and to beg for mercy, he would have been willing to spare her life. But she scorned to save her life by such means, and instead of begging for forgiveness, she spoke out boldly, and said: 'Higher than thy commands do I esteem those laws which set before us that which is noble and right.' Then the king was still more angry with her for not being afraid of him, and he condemned her to a cruel death. There was a cave outside the city, and the king commanded that she should be shut up there and left to die of hunger. Her friends accompanied her as far as the cave, weeping bitterly, but Antigone herself shed no tears. A pitcher of water and a little bread had been placed in the cave, and when Antigone had taken leave of her friends, she went inside, and the workmen piled up stones against the mouth of the cave and

walled her in. Thus the noble Antigone died; but she did not wait for the lingering death of starvation,—instead of that she made her veil into a noose and hanged herself.

King Adrastus heard with grief and anger that Creon had refused to allow the Argives to be buried, but as all the heroes of Argos had died in the war and there were none but young boys left in the city, he was unable to raise an army in order to compel him to do so. So he went to Athens with a twig in his hand (which it was the custom for those who wanted help to carry) and seated himself on the steps of the Altar of Pity.[1] Theseus came and asked what he wanted, and Adrastus told him of his misfortune and begged him to procure an honourable burial for the Argives. When Theseus heard about it all, he was very sorry for him, and he marched to Thebes at the head of a band of heroes, and said that unless Creon at once countermanded his wicked orders, he would destroy the city. Creon was afraid of Theseus, so he granted all that he required, and the heroes were buried with due honours.

[1] See page 196.

XXXI.

THE EPIGONI.

KING ADRASTUS never ceased to grieve over his heroes who had been slain by the Thebans, and when ten years had gone by, and the boys who were then quite young had grown up to be men, he assembled them and proposed to them to march against Thebes in order to avenge their fathers. They were quite ready to do this, for they were true heroes, with strong arms and brave hearts. Each of the seven heroes who had accompanied Adrastus on the former expedition had left a son, and these young men were called the Epigoni, or 'Those who come after.' They chose a strong band of followers from among the youths of Argos, and when they were all armed in readiness for the war, they sent to the Oracle at Delphi to ask whom they should take for their leader, for Adrastus was now too old and grey to head them himself. The Oracle said that they had better choose the son of Amphiaraus, who was named Alcmaeon, and who was wise and brave. Adrastus was full of joy at seeing the army of young men set out on its march, and trusted that the gods would give them the victory. The Epigoni took the same road by which their fathers had gone ten years before,

but instead of meeting with bad omens on the way, everything was now most prosperous.

Creon was by this time dead, and the son of Eteocles, whose name was Laodamas, was king of Thebes. When he heard that the Epigoni were coming to avenge their fathers, he armed the citizens and marched out to meet them, and a battle took place in front of the city gates, in the very same field where the heroes who accompanied Adrastus had fallen. The Epigoni thought of their fathers and fought the more bravely, and though the Thebans held their ground steadily at first, their courage gave way after their king, Laodamas, had been slain by Alcmaeon, and they fled back into the city. The Epigoni encamped before Thebes, saying that they would not raise the siege until they had conquered it, and the Thebans meanwhile held counsel as to how they might best save themselves from their vengeance. Among them was the blind seer, Tiresias, who had long ago foretold to Laïus that if a child were born to him, he would sin against both his father and mother. He was now very old, with hair as white as snow, and he had lived through all the prosperity and all the calamities of the Thebans, and was greatly honoured by them, so they went to him to ask his advice as to what they had better do. He said that they could only hope to save their lives by artifice, and told them how to set to work. According to his directions they sent a herald the next day to the Epigoni, to announce that the Thebans were willing to make some atonement for the slaughter of their fathers. The Epigoni did not suspect any trick, and began to negotiate with the herald as to what form the atonement should take, without per-

ceiving what was going on in the city. But meanwhile the Thebans were pouring out of it on the further side and taking with them whatever they regarded as the most precious of their possessions, and they succeeded in carrying off, not only their children, but also a good deal of treasure. When the Epigoni had announced what they would demand as an atonement, the herald returned to the city; but he only entered it by one gate in order to pass out on the further side by the gate through which the Thebans had fled, and he was not long in overtaking them. Tiresias had accompanied the Thebans, led by a boy; on the way he asked for something to drink, and the boy took him to a cool spring, but as soon as he had tasted the water he sank down and died. The Thebans buried him by the roadside, and then they marched on till they came to a strange land, where they built another city.

Meanwhile a day went by, and then another, and still the Epigoni waited for the herald to return. But when two days had passed without any further sign of him, and no one appeared upon the city walls, neither was there any smoke to be seen rising from the houses, they began to suspect that the Thebans had fled. They climbed over the walls without any resistance and entered the city, but they found no one there. There was, however, a great deal of treasure in the houses, for the Thebans had not been able to carry everything away with them, and the heroes took an enormous booty. They chose out the best things and sent them to Delphi as a present to Apollo, and the remainder they divided among themselves. They made Thersander, the son of Polynices, king of Thebes, and

proclaimed that those among the Argives who chose to remain in Thebes instead of returning home with Alcmaeon might settle there and have portions of the land assigned to them for their own. Many people from the neighbourhood came also into the city with their wives and children, so that before long all the houses were once more inhabited. Alcmaeon led back the remainder of the Argives to their own homes, for the Epigoni had now avenged their fathers, and had won for themselves glory and renown.

Alcmaeon now remembered the oath that he had once sworn to his father, before he set out with the other princes to march against Thebes. Amphiaraus had then made both his sons swear that they would avenge him upon Eriphyle for having allowed herself to be bribed by the veil and necklace to give her voice in favour of what she knew would cost him his life.[1] But it was a hard task for Alcmaeon, for Eriphyle was his mother. He did not know what to do, so he went to Delphi and asked the Oracle whether he should keep his promise to his father or not. The Oracle said yes, that he must do this; and so he returned home and killed his mother. When Eriphyle was dying, she cursed every country that should shelter her murderer, and the curse of the dying mother had such power that everything must needs carry it into effect. Alcmaeon became mad, and wandered about from one country to another till he came to a king named Phegeus, who knew how to purify murderers, and who had compassion on him and purged him from the stain of blood. Then the madness left him, and he was able to rest once

[1] See p. 215.

more. Phegeus gave him his daughter in marriage, and said that he should live in his country and have an honourable position there. Alcmaeon was very glad of this, and he presented the veil and necklace to his wife who was very much pleased with them. In the spring however, the seed did not come up, which caused a dearth throughout the land,—and this was owing to the curse of Eriphyle. The king consulted a seer about it, and he said that the land would not bear fruit so long as Alcmaeon remained in the kingdom.

So Alcmaeon had to take leave of his wife and quit the country, and he set out not knowing whither to go. He went to Delphi and asked the Pythia if there was any land that could receive him without suffering for it; and she answered that he must go to the river-god Acheloüs and ask him to help him, for that no one else could do so. Alcmaeon therefore went to the river and called to Acheloüs, who came up out of the water and asked what he wanted. Alcmaeon told him of his distress and begged for his help, and the river-god took pity on him and made his stream bring down sand and silt from the heights above, until a new and fruitful country was formed by the side of the river; and as it had not been in existence when Eriphyle cursed the land that should give her son rest, Alcmaeon was able to remain there, and he ploughed and sowed seed, and the earth brought forth fruit. Acheloüs had a very beautiful daughter, and Alcmaeon became so much attached to her, that he was unfaithful to his wife, and married the daughter of the river-god. Several years passed by in peace and prosperity; the gods sent them two sons, and Alcmaeon had no thought of ever leaving his place of shelter.

But the daughter of Acheloüs had heard of the beautiful veil and necklace, and she never ceased to beg her husband to go and fetch them for her, till at last he was obliged to yield, and set out for the country of King Phegeus. He did not tell Phegeus the truth however, but said that he was still obliged to wander about, and could only obtain rest by taking the veil and necklace to Delphi and dedicating them to Apollo. The daughter of Phegeus did not doubt his sincerity, and readily parted with the precious ornaments for the sake of her husband whom she loved dearly. But before Alcmaeon had reached home again, King Phegeus heard that he had been unfaithful and had married the daughter of Acheloüs, and he was very angry, and commanded his sons to go after him and kill him. They were wild headstrong youths who delighted in deeds of blood, and they overtook Alcmaeon and killed him and took away both the treasures. Then they returned home, thinking that their sister would rejoice at the vengeance that had overtaken her husband; but though he had married another woman, she was very sorry for his death and was angry with her brothers for having killed him.

The daughter of Acheloüs waited long for Alcmaeon to return home; but a good while afterwards, a stranger who happened to be passing that way told her that he had been put to death by the sons of Phegeus. Then it was her greatest wish to avenge his death, and she begged Zeus that her two sons might at once become grown-up men. In that same night the children grew up to be men, and their mother provided them with weapons, and told them that their father had been murdered by the sons of Phegeus, and that they were

to avenge him. They set off for the country of Phegeus, but on their way they stopped to rest at the house of a prince where it happened that the sons of Phegeus were also staying, for they too were on a journey, and they had with them the veil and the necklace. The young men did not know each other, but as they were talking together at the feast, the sons of Phegeus brought out the precious ornaments and showed them to the others who thus recognised the murderers of their father, and they drew their swords and killed them. Then they returned home to their mother with the precious treasures. But the wise river-god said that they were no real treasures, for they brought misfortune to whoever possessed them; and he made his grandsons carry them to Delphi, and present them as an offering to the god Apollo.

XXXII.

EROS AND PSYCHE.

THERE lived once a king and queen who had three daughters. The youngest of them was named Psyche, and she was so wonderfully beautiful that when she went through the streets, the people threw flowers before her and kissed their hands to her, as they used to do to the statues of the gods. The only one who did not delight in her was the goddess Aphrodite. She was accustomed to drive through the city in a chariot drawn by doves, and every time she did so it vexed her afresh to see that the townspeople neglected her worship in order to pay homage to the lovely Psyche, as if it were she and not Aphrodite who was the goddess of beauty. And she called her son Eros, who was the god of love, and commanded him to cause the princess whom she hated to set her love upon the most unworthy of all mortals.

Not long afterwards the old king asked the Oracle to whom he should give his daughter Psyche in marriage, and the answer he received was that she must be dressed as a bride and led to the top of a rocky cliff that stood up high above the city, and that then all her friends must say good-bye to her for ever, and leave her there alone to be taken to the house of the husband ap-

pointed for her. And that if he refused to obey the Oracle, grievous misfortune would befall him and all his household. The king and queen were greatly distressed at this sentence, and the whole land mourned with them, for why should the Oracle speak so mysteriously if it did not mean that the appointed husband was some horrible monster? But they were obliged to obey, lest some worse misfortune should overtake them. Psyche was dressed as a bride and led to the rock, in a procession of the citizens. The flutes and other musical instruments gave forth joyous sounds; but louder still was heard the sound of mourning and lamentation. The grey-haired father and mother wept bitterly as they kissed their child for the last time, and then the wedding torches were put out, and the procession wound sadly and silently back to the city.

Psyche meanwhile was left alone upon the desolate rock; but very soon a Wind-god came, who seized her in his arms and flew through the air with her, till at last he put her down in a valley on the further side of the hill. Psyche hid her face in her hands at first that she might not see the horrible things she expected to find all round her; but when she did venture timidly to open her eyes, she could scarcely believe what she saw. She found herself seated in a meadow full of flowers, with a clear stream running through it, and a wood near by, in front of which there stood a most beautiful palace; its roof was supported by pillars of pure gold, and its walls were covered with sculptures wrought in silver. Full of astonishment, Psyche rose and went towards the palace. As she approached it, she noticed that the air was filled with a delicious scent, and when

she entered the palace, she met with some new splendour at every step. The rooms were furnished with great magnificence, and were filled with beautiful ornaments of gold and silver. Then there fell upon her ear the sweet voice of a nymph, which said, 'We are at your service, and prepared to carry out your wishes, whatever they may be.' Psyche thought she would like to refresh herself with some cool water, and in a moment a beautiful bath was drawn forward by unseen hands and placed before her. After she had bathed and anointed herself, she went into the next room where she found a table spread with a tempting meal, and all the while she was eating, sounds of sweet music were heard and songs were sung by unseen nymphs. When Psyche had finished, she felt in need of rest, and she lay down on a couch and went to sleep. Meanwhile it became quite dark, and by-and-by she was awakened by a gentle movement, and a sweet voice said to her, 'I am thy husband, and this house is thine and mine,—all its splendours are for thy pleasure,—but never seek to see my face, for then I should be obliged to leave thee for ever.' The husband remained with her until the day was about to dawn, and then he vanished.

The next day, and each following day, everything happened as before: the unseen nymphs waited on Psyche and shortened the hours by singing and playing to her, and with the darkness came the husband who remained in the palace until morning.

The heart of Psyche was divided between joy and sorrow. Her kind husband and the wonders and delights of the palace filled her with joy, but tears often came to her eyes in thinking of her parents and her play-

fellows. Once when she was looking towards the high rock from which she had been brought by the Wind-god, she saw her two sisters there, and she was filled with so great a longing to see them again that when next her husband came to her, she begged him to send for them. For a moment he hesitated, but then he promised to do as she wished, and told her also that she might give them anything she liked out of the treasures of the palace to take away with them as presents; 'but,' he added, 'take care not to let them delude you into making any attempt to see my face.' Psyche promised without any misgiving, for she felt herself perfectly free from curiosity.

On the following day when the two sisters again appeared on the rock, the Wind-god took them up on his shoulders and carried them into the beautiful valley. Psyche received them with many embraces, and asked them endless questions about her parents and play-fellows. Then she led them into the palace and desired the music to sound, whilst she showed them all the beautiful things. They were dumb with amazement, and stood looking at one another; and then Psyche asked them to choose whatever they liked best to take away with them, for they were quite welcome to it. But the two sisters had wicked, envious dispositions, and were not pleased that Psyche should be so much better off than they were. They asked who was her husband, and when she told them that he was kind and good, but that she had never seen him and that she was forbidden ever to seek to do so, they made a sign one to the other, and one of them pretended to cry, and said, 'Ah, dear sister, it must

then be true what the people say. They say that every evening a hideous monster is seen to creep into this valley,—a horrible serpent with bloody jaws.' And the other sister pretended to weep also, and she said, 'When he gets to the palace he takes the form of a man; but no doubt his countenance bears the traces of his cruel nature, and that is the reason why he will not let you look at him. Alas! only too soon shall we have to deplore your miserable death.'

Psyche was herself so entirely free from falseness that she had no suspicion of the treachery of her sisters. She was horror-struck at what they said, and though at first she refused to believe that the gentle voice she had so often heard could come from the jaws of a monster, yet they so persisted in tormenting her with their crafty speeches, that at last she ended by believing them, and was only anxious to escape from the dreadful creature. When the eldest sister saw this, she said to her, 'There is just one means of saving your life. You must summon up your courage, and to-night, when the monster is asleep, take your lamp in your hand and a sharp knife, and go to his couch and pierce him through the heart with the knife.' She said this because she thought that if Psyche disobeyed her husband by looking at him when he was asleep, all her happiness would be at an end. The two sisters gave Psyche no peace till she had made up her mind to do as they said. Then they took as many of the treasures of the palace as they could carry, and Psyche called to the Wind-god to come and take them away again.

When it was dark, her husband came as usual; but she was afraid of him, and could hardly find a word to

say in answer to his friendly greeting. And at midnight, when he was fast asleep, she lit a lamp, and taking a knife in her hand, went to his couch with the intention of killing him. The light fell upon the couch, and there she saw,—no monster, but Eros himself, the winged god of love, radiant with beauty. The knife fell from her hand, and she felt that she could never be weary of gazing at his glorious form. But as she bent over him she forgot to take care that the lamp in her hand was held straight, and a drop of hot oil was spilt, which fell upon his shoulder and awoke him. He opened his eyes and saw Psyche bending over him with the lamp in her hand. He looked at her very sorrowfully, and said, 'Thou hast mistrusted me and transgressed my command; my dwelling is no longer here. I am Eros, as thou hast discovered. My mother Aphrodite is angry with thee, and she commanded me to cause thee to love the most unworthy of men. But when I saw thee, I was myself filled with love for thee, and determined to hide thee from my mother that thou mightest be my wife. Only in the deepest secrecy have I dared to act against her will. And now thou hast disobeyed my command, and I must leave thee for ever.' When he had said this, he took up his bow and quiver which stood by the side of the couch, and flew away.

Psyche was filled with the bitterest remorse, and desired to live no longer. When the day dawned, she went to the river and threw herself into it. But the river-god was unwilling to kill anything so beautiful, and he carried her on the top of his waters to the farther shore, and set her down there. The birds were chirping in the trees, and the morning sun looked down

so pleasantly on the river and the meadows that a ray of hope sprang up in her heart, and she thought, 'How if I could succeed in winning him back? They say that he is the kindest of all the gods. I will go all over the world seeking him.' So she set out, and took no heed of the roughness of the way or of the thorns that pierced her feet, and wandered into all corners of the world, hoping to find some trace of him.

After she had wandered for a long time, she came to the palace of Aphrodite, and she said to herself, 'The goddess is indeed angry with me, but is her anger mightier than my grief? I will enter her service, and it may be that I shall succeed in gaining her good will.' So she went into the palace, and offered herself as servant to the goddess. Now Aphrodite knew that instead of doing Psyche any injury, Eros had secretly married her, for a sea-gull that had made its nest for a time in the valley had told her about it. She felt therefore a grim joy when the unhappy girl put herself into her power, and in a haughty tone she said to her, 'If your mind is set on being beloved by a god, you will have to accomplish hard tasks, and it will be the worse for you if you fail to perform them.' Then she set her the first task. She piled up in front of the palace a great heap of seeds,—wheat, beans, poppies, and peas,—all mixed together, and saying, 'Before night comes all the seeds must be sorted,' she went away. Psyche could not have done it in ten days. She sat down by the heap, buried her face in her hands, and wept bitterly. But there lived close by a great nation of ants, and one of them saw the beautiful girl crying, and was sorry for her, and called

the others to come and help her. Then there came an endless array of ants, who set to work and soon sorted the seeds, though some of them were so large that it took four, eight, or even ten ants to roll a single seed to its place, and when Psyche looked up, the work was done and the ants were marching away again. She kissed her hands to them, and thanked them prettily for their kindness. When Aphrodite came home in the evening and saw the seeds laid out in order, she could find no fault with her industrious servant, but she gave her a look that was far from friendly, for she would much rather have had some excuse for blaming her.

The next morning she said to Psyche, 'There is a copse near by, where there graze some sheep with golden fleeces. Go and fetch me three tufts of their wool.' Psyche set out, and went slowly along the river-side towards the wood. On the bank stood some reeds which rustled in the morning breeze, and the rustling turned into words like these, 'Take care what you do, for the golden-fleeced sheep are fierce animals, and their bite is poisonous. Wait till mid-day, and then go into the copse and look at the bushes.' So said the reeds, and then they rustled again as before. Psyche thanked them, and sat down by the side of the river until the shadows were at their shortest. Then she knew it was mid-day, and she went into the copse and found the sheep all lying asleep. She trod gently so as not to wake them, and looked at the bushes which were covered with tufts of golden wool, for the sheep had rubbed themselves against the bushes and left part of their fleeces sticking to the thorns. Psyche took the three best tufts and left the copse. When she came back

and gave them to her mistress, Aphrodite was surprised, for she had expected that Psyche would be bitten to death by the fierce sheep. She said to her with an angry look, 'You have not yet finished your day's work. Take your pitcher and ascend that hill. At the top of it there is some black water. Fetch me some.'

Psyche started off obediently with her pitcher. When she reached the hill, she saw before her a steep path leading up to the spring, but near it were two dreadful dragons who looked as if they would not let any one pass them alive. The water fell into a dark ravine by the side of the path, and flowed deep down into the Lower World. It bubbled angrily in the hollow, and called out to Psyche, 'What do you want here? Go away, and be quick about it, or your life is not worth much.' Psyche put down her pitcher and stood still, weeping bitterly. But she had not been there long when there appeared a great eagle, which circled round her several times and then seized the handle of her pitcher in his beak and flew off with it to the spring. The dragons howled, and raised themselves as high as they could in the air that they might be the better able to shoot out flames at him from their mouths, but their fiery breath was powerless to scorch him. He came back with the filled pitcher which he set down beside Psyche, and then he spread his wings again and had soon disappeared among the clouds. Psyche cast a grateful glance after him, took up her pitcher, and set out joyfully on her way home. When Aphrodite saw her returning, she felt sure that she had come with an empty pitcher, for she knew that if she

had attempted to pass the dragons they would have killed her, and she thought that she would now be able to imprison her in a damp dungeon and keep her without sufficient food or sunshine. But when she looked into the vessel, she saw that it was full of the black water which Psyche had been desired to fetch. She was very angry, and poured it out upon the ground, for it was of no use to her, and began to ponder what task she could impose upon Psyche which would bring about her death without fail.

The next morning Psyche was summoned to the presence of her harsh mistress, who said to her, 'Take this golden casket to the Queen of the Lower World, and ask her to send me some of the Salve of Beauty.' Psyche left the palace, but she made up her mind that she would kill herself at once rather than attempt to take the message, for she shuddered at the horrors of the Lower World, and moreover she could not hope that if she once entered its gates she would ever be allowed to come out again. She ascended a high tower which was grey with old age, meaning to throw herself down from it; but as she stood on the top, the stones began to utter sounds, and the aged tower said, 'Do not despair, I will give you good counsel. Go to Mount Taenarus, and there you will find a dark chasm that leads down to the Lower World. The ferry-man who will row you across the river Acheron demands passage money; put two copper coins between your teeth, and hold out your mouth to him, so that he may take his fare for himself. At the gate of the Land of Shades there stands the hideous dog Cerberus. For him take a honey-cake in each of your hands, and throw him one

when you go in at the gate, and the other when you come out again. And beware of letting either of the cakes out of your hand, for then you would find yourself imprisoned for ever in the Lower World. Persephone will fill the casket for you. Do not let anything induce you to open it.' Then the tower ceased speaking, and Psyche resolved to summon her courage and undertake the dreadful journey. She put two copper coins between her teeth, and taking a honey-cake in each hand, she went along the dark road until she reached the gloomy twilight of the Lower World. Presently she met a lame man, who was driving a lame, heavily-laden ass. He was holding up the burden which was falling from off the ass, and he called out to Psyche in a piteous voice, begging her to pick up a piece of rope from the ground for him that he might tie the burden on with it. The tender-hearted Psyche found it difficult to refuse, but she could not have done what he wanted without neglecting the warning of the tower on no account to let go of her honey-cakes; so she passed on without answering, and immediately the man and the ass vanished. Psyche next came to the river Acheron, and the surly ferryman Charon rowed her over it in his boat after he had taken one of the copper coins from her mouth. Close to the boat there swam an old man whose appearance was most pitiful,—his strength was evidently failing him, and he seemed about to sink. He stretched out one of his thin arms towards Psyche, and begged her with beseeching gestures to hold out her hand to him. But Psyche remembered the warning, and immediately the old man disappeared. When they reached the further

shore, there sat three old women by the road-side spinning, who called out to her in a pleasant voice and asked her to cut their thread for them. They were nice, kind-looking old women, but Psyche remembered the warning, and immediately they disappeared as the others had done.

After this, Psyche soon arrived at the gate of the Land of Shades, in front of which stood the three-headed dog Cerberus. She threw him a cake, and he let her go by. Then she saw flitting about her on all sides, pale, silent shades, and she was seized with horror, but she overcame it, and went on bravely to the palace of Queen Persephone and delivered her message. Persephone filled the box and gave it back to her. The fierce dog let her pass out when she gave him the second honey-cake, Charon took the second coin out of her mouth and rowed her back across the river, and at last she found herself in the sunshine once more. She was very tired and sat down on a stone to rest a little, and she thought to herself, 'I have gone through the horrors of the Lower World, and have fulfilled the command of the cruel goddess. But will she give me any thanks for it?' For some time she sat buried in sad thoughts; then she said, 'How if I were to open the casket and test the power of the wonderful salve? Perhaps it would give me such beauty that Eros would come back to me.' Quickly she lifted the cover, but there came out of the casket a cloud of stupefying vapour which threw her into a deep sleep. Before Psyche entered the Lower World, Aphrodite had sent a messenger to the Queen to beg her, instead of filling the casket with the Salve of Beauty, to put into it a

narcotic vapour, for she thought that even if Psyche surmounted all the other difficulties in her path, she might at last be conquered by the temptation of curiosity and open the casket.

But Eros was not far off. He had seen how Psyche had gone through so many dangers and horrors for love of him, and now he came and wiped away the magic vapour which had settled on her face, and shut it up again in the casket. Then he soared up to Olympus, the abode of the gods, and entreated Zeus to gift Psyche with immortality, and allow him to be married to her. Zeus granted his request, and sent down Hermes, the messenger, to raise Psyche from the earth and bring her into the assembly of the gods. Before them all, Zeus held out to her a shell filled with nectar, the drink of the gods, and said to her, 'Drink immortality.' Even Aphrodite kissed her and blessed the marriage, for her anger had been overcome by Psyche's faithful love. The marriage was celebrated with great joyfulness,—Apollo and the Muses sang, the Graces danced, and the whole vault of heaven resounded with the mirth of the wedding guests.

The envious sisters were already dead. After they had plunged Psyche into misery, they each hoped to become the bride of the unknown husband, and each in turn went to the rock and threw herself from it, expecting the Wind-god to carry her into the valley as he had done before, but instead of that, they both fell down among sharp stones and perished miserably. Thus did they come to a bad end; but Psyche was enthroned as a goddess beside her Love, in the unending joy of the blessed Immortals.

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Aventīnus, Mt. A mountain in Italy over which Heracles is driving the cattle of Geryon when they are stolen by the Giant Cacus, 130.

BACCHANTES. Followers of Dionysus or Bacchus, 65 to 67.

Beam, The Sacred. A beam with the power of speech,—sent by Athene to be inserted in the Argo, 153. It reproves Jason and Medea for their crime, 167. Dies of old age, 171.

Bellerophon. Son of Glaucus, and grandson of Sisyphus, kings of Corinth, 45. Kills his brother unintentionally, and goes to King Proetus to be purged from the stain of blood, 45. Is sent by Proetus to Iobates king of Lycia, 46. Slays the Chimaera by the help of the winged horse Pegasus, 47 to 50. Marries the king's daughter and settles in the country, 51.

Bias. Brother of Melampus. Obtains the hand of Pero, daughter of king Neleus, through the kindness of his brother, 69 to 72. Obtains also a third part of the dominions of Proetus, king of Argos, 73 and 74.

Black Sea. Crossed by Phrixus when carried by the Golden Ram to Colchis, 150. Passed through by the Argonauts on their way to Colchis, 155.

Boreas. The god of the North Wind, 158.

Bull of Crete or of Marathon. Sent by Poseidon to Minos for sacrifice, 122. Taken to Mycenae by Heracles, 123. Captured by Theseus and sacrificed to Apollo, 184 and 185.

Busīris. A king of Egypt who sacrificed a stranger every year to the gods. Is killed by Heracles, 133 and 134.

CACUS. A giant living on Mt. Aventinus. Steals the cattle of Heracles and is killed by him, 130 and 131.

Cadmēa. The fortress of Thebes. Named after Cadmus, 58. Hera enters and gives bad advice to Semele, 61. It is visited by a devastating Fox, whom Amphitryon overcomes with the help of the Athenian Dog, 106.

Cadmus. Sets off in search of his sister Europa, 55. Is directed to found a city, 56. Sows dragon's teeth, from which spring warriors who help him to build the Cadmea, 57 and 58. Marries Harmonia, 58. Is the father of Semele, 61.

Calydon. The country of Oeneus and the scene of the great boar-hunt in which Meleager and Atalanta take part, 83–89. Heracles goes there to sue for Deianira, 142, and spends some years there, 143.

Capaneūs. One of the Seven Heroes who march against Thebes, 213 and 214. Is killed by lightning, 219.

Cassiopēa. Wife of Cepheus and mother of Andromeda. Punished by Poseidon for her pride, 98 and 99.

Castor. Son of Tyndareus and Leda, and twin-brother of Pollux, 200. Takes part in the expedition of the Argonauts,

157. Rescues his sister Helena, 201. Shares the fate of his brother Pollux after death as well as through life, 201.

Caucasus, Mt. Prometheus is chained there, 12.

Centaurs. Monstrous creatures, half men, half horses. Quarrel with Heracles, 117 to 119. Fight with the Lapithae, who overcome them with the help of Theseus, 196. (See also *Chiron, Nessus, and Pholus.*)

Cepheus. King of a part of Africa. Husband of Cassiopea and father of Andromeda, 99 and 100.

Cerberus. A three-headed dog who stood as watchman at the gate of the land of Shades. Heracles is sent to fetch him to the Upper World, 135. He allows Psyche to pass him, 242.

Ceryneian Hind. A hind under the protection of Artemis, captured by Heracles as his third Labour, 116 and 117.

Chaos. The state of the universe before the creation of the heaven and the earth, 1.

Charon. The ferryman who conducted mortals to the Lower World. Rows Psyche across the river Acheron, 241.

Chimaera. A monster half-lion, half-goat, with a serpent's tail, 47. Killed by Bellerophon, 48 to 50.

Chiron. The wisest and best of the Centaurs. Instructs Heracles, 100. Is killed by him unintentionally, 118 and 119.

Circē. An enchantress, sister of King Aeëtes. Purges Jason and Medea from the blood of Absyrtus, 167.

Cithaeron, Mt. Heracles pastures the flocks of Amphitryon on this mountain, and slays the lion whose skin he afterwards wears, 110 and 111. Oedipus is left there to perish by his parents, 205.

Club-carrier. One of the robbers killed by Theseus on his journey to Athens, 179.

Clytaemnestra. Daughter of Tyndareus and Leda, 200.

Colchis. The city of King Aeëtes. Phrixus is brought there by the Golden Ram, 150. The Argonauts reach Colchis, 159.

Corinth. The country of Sisyphus, 43. Bellerophon is obliged to leave Corinth on account of the murder of his brother, 45. Jason and Medea settle there, 173. Oedipus is brought there and adopted by King Polybus, 205 and 206.

Creon (1). King of Corinth. Receives Jason and Medea, and offers his daughter Glauce to Jason for a wife, 173 and 174. (2). King of Thebes. Purges Amphitryon from the blood of Electryon, 105. Accompanies him on his expedition against the Teleboae, 106 & 107. Gives his daughter Megara to Heracles for a wife, 112. (3). Brother Jocasta. Becomes King of Thebes, 221. Refuses burial to the Argives and condemns Antigone to death for disobeying his orders, 221 to 223. Is compelled by Theseus to rescind them, 223.

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Cronus. Son of Uranus and Gala. Dethrones his father and succeeds him as king of the gods, 2. Marries Rhea, 2. Is dispossessed by his son Zeus, 3 and 4.

DAEDALUS. An artist employed by Minos king of Crete. Builds the Labyrinth, 52. Escapes with his son Icarus, 52 and 53.

Danaē. Daughter of Acrisius, king of Argos. Is married to Zeus, and becomes the mother of Perseus, 95 and 96. Is shut up in a chest by her father and cast adrift, 95. Is allowed to take refuge on an island, 96. Is delivered by Perseus from the king, 101.

Danaïdes. The daughters of Danaus. They sail to Argos with their father, 34. Kill their husbands at his command, 35 and 36. Are condemned to unending punishment in the Lower World, 37 and 38.

Danaus. A descendant of Io. Flees from his home in Africa with his daughters, and settles in Argos, 34. Becomes king of Argos, 35. Commands his daughters to kill their husbands, and wishes to punish Hypermnestra for failing to obey him, 36 and 37.

Deianīra. Daughter of Oeneus king of Calydon. Is wooed by both Heracles and the river-god Acheloüs, who agree to fight for her, 142. Marries Heracles, 143. Receives from the Centaur Nessus a cloth dipped in his blood, 144. Smears with this cloth the robe of Heracles, and thus causes his death, 145 and 146. Hangs herself in despair, 147.

Dēlos. A floating island. Leto takes refuge on it, and Poseidon causes four pillars to spring up and hold it fast, 23. Apollo and Artemis are born there, 23. The island is honoured by the Greeks, 24.

Delphi. A city of Greece in which there was an oracle of Apollo, 55. (See *Oracle.*) Heracles carries off the sacred Tripod, 139. The Epigoni present to Apollo the best of the spoil taken from Thebes, 226. Acheloüs advises his grand-children to offer the veil and necklace of Harmonia to Apollo at Delphi, 230.

Dēmētēr. Daughter of Cronus, 4. Seeks for her daughter Persephone, 16 to 18. Creates corn and teaches Triptolemus how to cultivate it, 18 and 19. Eats by mistake the shoulder of Pelops, 75 and 76.

Deucalion. Son of Prometheus. Saves himself and his wife Pyrrha in a wooden chest at the time of the great Flood, 13 and 14. They re-people the earth by throwing stones behind them which become men and women, 15.

Diomēdēs. A king of Thrace who fed his horses on human flesh. Heracles is sent by Eurystheus to fetch the horses to Mycenae; he conquers the king and throws him to be eaten by his own horses, 123 and 124.

Dionȳsus. Son of Zeus and Semele. Is placed under the charge of Athamas, 63; then under that of some nymphs, 64. Is gifted by Zeus with divine

power, 64 and 65. Creates the Vine, 65. Sets out upon a triumphal journey round the world, 65. Punishes the sailors who refuse to take him to Naxos, 66 and 67. Punishes the daughters of Proetus who refuse to honour him, 73. Is received into the abode of the gods, 67. Marries Ariadne, 192.

Dioscūri. The brothers Castor and Pollux, 201.

Doliōnes. A people in whose country the Argonauts land on their way to Colchis, 154 and 155.

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Electryon. Son and successor of Perseus. His right is disputed by Pterelaus king of the Teleboae, 104. He prepares to make an expedition against the Teleboae, but is killed accidentally by Amphitryon, 105.

Elis. A country of Greece. Ruled over by Salmoneus, 42. Pelops goes to Elis to sue for Hippodamia, conquers her father in the chariot-race, and becomes king, 77 to 79. Heracles cleanses the stables of Augeas, king of Elis, 119 and 120. He marches against Elis to punish Augeas for his faithlessness, and transfers the kingdom to Phyleus, 141 and 142.

Endymion. A son of Zeus. Asks that he may sleep for ever, 29. Is beloved by the goddess Selene, 30.

Ephialtēs. Brother of Otus, and son of Poseidon, 27. The brothers fight against the gods, and make Ares prisoner, 28. They are killed through a device of the goddess Artemis, 28.

Epigoni. The sons of the Seven Heroes defeated before Thebes. They march against Thebes to avenge the death of their fathers, and take possession of the city, 224 to 227.

Epimētheūs. Brother of Prometheus, 9. Zeus sends Pandora to be his wife, 10 and 11.

Ergīnus. King of the Minyae. Demands tribute from the Thebans, 111. Is attacked and conquered by Heracles, 112.

Eriphȳlē. Wife of Amphiaraus and sister of Adrastus, 214. Decides that Amphiaraus shall march against Thebes, 215. Is killed by her son Alcmaeon, 227.

Erōs. The god of Love—son of Aphrodite, 231. Is commanded by his mother to do Psyche an injury, but instead of that, marries her secretly, 231 to 236. Is obliged to leave her, 236. Obtains the gift of immortality for Psyche, and the sanction of the gods to his marriage with her, 243.

Erymanthus, Mt. The home of the boar captured by Heracles as his Fourth Labour, 117 to 119.

Etēoclēs. Son of Oedipus and Jocasta. Banishes his brother Polynices from Thebes, 212. Defies the summons of the Argives to surrender the kingdom, 218. Challenges Polynices to a single combat, in which each brother kills the other, 220.

Euboea. The country of Eurytus. Heracles goes there to sue for Iole, 157. Heracles conquers

the city and kills Eurytus and his sons, 145.

Eurōpa. Sister of Cadmus. Is carried off by Zeus in the form of a bull, 54 and 58.

Europe. The country to which Europa was carried by the bull, and which was called after her, 58. Heracles reaches the extreme limit of Europe, 128. Phrixus and Helle are carried away from it into Asia by the Golden Ram, 150.

Eurȳstheūs. Son of Sthenelus. Becomes king of Mycenae and Tiryns, 109. Is served for twelve years by Heracles who performs twelve Labours at his command, 113 to 137.

Eurytus. King of Euboea. Refuses to give his daughter Iole in marriage to Heracles and taunts him with his former madness, 137. He and his sons are killed by Heracles, 145.

Evēnus. Father of Marpessa. Refuses to let his daughter marry Idas, 20. Pursues Idas and Marpessa, and being unable to overtake them, drowns himself, 21.

FATES. Three goddesses who determine the course of men's lives. They are present at the birth of Meleager, 83. They promise that Admetus shall recover if one of his relatives will die for him, 93. They decree that the Theban Fox shall never be caught, and that the Athenian Dog shall never pursue in vain, 106.

Fir-bendar. One of the robbers killed by Theseus on his journey to Athens, 179 and 180.

Flood. Zeus destroys the whole race of men by a great Flood, excepting Deucalion and Pyrrha, 13 to 15.

GAEA. Wife of Uranus and goddess of the earth, 1. Helps her son Cronus to dethrone his father, 2. Plans the overthrow of Cronus, 3. Creates Giants to fight against the gods, 5; also a monster named Typhōeus, 6. Interferes to prevent Phaëthon from burning up the earth, 41.

Ganymede. Son of Laomedon king of Troy. Is carried off to Olympus by the sacred eagle of Zeus, 127.

Garden of the Hesperides. A garden in Oceanus where Hera planted the golden apple-tree, given her by the Earth at her marriage with Zeus. Heracles is sent by Eurystheus to fetch three golden apples from it, 131 to 135.

Geryon. A three-headed king in the far West, possessor of a beautiful herd of red-brown cattle. He loses his life in defending them against Heracles, 128 and 129.

Giants. Huge monsters created by Gaea to fight against the gods. They are defeated in a great battle, and buried beneath volcanic mountains, 6.

Glaucē. Daughter of Creon king of Corinth. Is offered to Jason as a bride, 173 and 174. Her death is caused by Medea, 174.

Glaucus. Son of Sisyphus, and father of Bellerophon, 45.

Golden Age. The time when men were first created, and lived long and happy lives, 8.

Golden Fleece. The fleece of the ram who carried Phrixus to Colchis. It is hung up on a tree in a forest near Colchis, 150. Jason is sent to fetch it, 152. He carries it off from

the forest, 165; and brings it safely to Iolcus, 171.

Gorgons. Three sisters with iron claws and golden wings and live serpents instead of hair, who turned to stone everyone that looked at them, 96 and 98. Perseus cuts off the head of Medusa, the youngest Gorgon, 98.

Graces. Three beautiful daughters of Zeus. They dance at the wedding of Eros and Psyche, 243.

Grey Sisters. Sisters of the Gorgons who had only one eye and one tooth between them. Perseus goes to their cave and obliges them to tell him where to find the nymphs who can help him obtain the head of Medusa, 97.

HARMONIA. Daughter of Ares and Aphrodite. Is married to Cadmus, 58. Is presented by Hephaestus with a beautiful veil and necklace, 214

Harpies. Creatures with the bodies of maidens and the feet and wings of ravens. They torment Phineus until they are killed by the Argonauts, 157 and 158.

Hēbē. A goddess,—daughter of Hera. Is given by her in marriage to Heracles, 147.

Helena. Daughter of Zeus and Leda, 200. Is carried off by Theseus and Pirithoüs, 199. Is rescued by her brothers, Castor and Pollux, 201.

Hēlios. The sun-god. Tells Demeter that Pluto has carried off her daughter, 17. Unwillingly grants the request of his son Phaēthon to be allowed to drive the chariot of the sun, 39 to 41. Lends Heracles his golden shell that he may sail in it to the island of Geryon, 129.

Hellē. Daughter of King Athamas and sister of Phrixus. Is carried away, with her brother, by the Golden Ram, but falls off his back into the sea and is drowned, 148 to 150.

Hellespont. The sea which lies between Europe and Asia. Called after Helle, 150.

Hephaestus. Fashions Pandora out of clay, 10. Binds Prometheus to a rock on Mt. Caucasus, 12. Helps to arm Heracles for his fight with the Minyae, 112. Makes the rattle which Heracles uses to drive away the Stymphalian birds, 122. Makes an iron watchman for Minos king of Crete, 169. Presents a beautiful veil and necklace to Cadmus and Harmonia, 214

Hēra. Daughter of Cronus, 4. Becomes the wife of Zeus and queen of the gods, 4. Is presented by the Earth at her marriage with a golden apple-tree, 131. Persecutes Leto, 23; and Io, 31 to 33. Gives treacherous advice to Semele, 61. Punishes Athamas for receiving Dionysus, 63 and 150. Is reconciled to Dionysus and Semele, 67. Causes Eurystheus to be born before Heracles and thus become heir to the cities of Mycenae and Tiryns, 109. Sends serpents to kill Heracles when a child, 109. Afflicts him with madness, 113. Takes the form of an Amazon and leads an attack upon Heracles, 125. Sends a great gnat to torment his cattle, 131. Raises a storm to destroy him, 141; and is punished for this by Zeus, 141. Is reconciled to Heracles and welcomes him among the gods, 147. Protects the Argonauts

in their passage through the Wandering Rocks, 169.

Hēraclēs. Son of Zeus and Alcmene, 108 and 109. Strangles two serpents sent by Hera to kill him in his sleep, 109. Is taught by the Centaur Chiron, 110. Kills a lion on Mt. Cithaeron and dresses himself in the skin, 110 and 111. Conquers the Minyae and kills their king, Erginus, 111 and 112. Marries Megara, 112. Becomes mad, and throws his children into the fire, 113. Leaves Thebes in consequence, and enters the service of Eurystheus for whom he performs twelve Labours:—

1st Labour. Killing the Nemean Lion, 113 and 114.

2nd Labour. Killing the Lernean Hydra, 114 to 116.

3rd Labour. Capturing the Ceryneian Hind, 116 and 117.

4th Labour. Bringing the Erymanthian Boar to Mycenae, 117 and 119.

5th Labour. Cleansing the stables of Augeas in a single day, 119 to 121.

6th Labour. Driving away the Stymphalian Birds, 121 and 122.

7th Labour. Bringing the Cretan Bull to Mycenae, 122 and 123.

8th Labour. Bringing to Mycenae the fierce horses of Diomedes, 123 and 124.

9th Labour. Obtaining the girdle of the Queen of the Amazons, 124 to 126.

10th Labour. Fetching the cattle of Geryon, 128 to 131.

11th Labour. Procuring three golden apples from the Garden of the Hesperides, 131 to 135.

12th Labour. Fetching the three-headed dog Cerberus from the Lower World, 135 to 137.

Heracles delivers Prometheus from the eagle, 12. Fights with the Centaurs and causes the death of Chiron unintentionally, 117 to 119. Delivers Hesione from the monster, 126 and 127. Punishes Laomedon her father for breaking his word to him, 140. Kills the giant Cacus for stealing his cattle, 130 and 131. Wrestles with Nereus the sea-god, 132. Wrestles with Antaeus, son of the Earth, and squeezes him to death, 133. Kills Busiris who had been accustomed to sacrifice a stranger every year to the gods, 133 and 134. Visits Atlas, and takes his place for a time in supporting the heaven, 134 and 135. Goes to Oechalia to sue for Iole daughter of King Eurytus, and is taunted by her father with his former madness, 137 and 138. Punishes Eurytus for this, 145. Kills Iphitus, son of Eurytus, 138. Is smitten with sickness, and when he asks the Oracle what he shall do, is refused an answer, 139. Quarrels with Apollo about this and carries off the sacred Tripod, 139. Enters the service of Omphale queen of Lydia, with whom he remains for three years, 139 and 140. Punishes Augeas for his faithlessness, 141 and 142. Goes to Calydon to sue for Deianira, and wins her in a contest with the river-god Acheloüs, 142 and 143. Marries Deianira and lives with her for some time in Calydon, 143. Accidentally kills his servant-boy and has to leave, and

go to Trachin to be purified, 143 and 144. Is about to celebrate his victory over Eurytus when he receives from Deianira a robe poisoned with the blood of the Centaur Nessus, which causes him such terrible suffering that he resolves to die, 145 and 146. Ascends Mt. Oeta and builds a funeral pile which he causes to be set alight, 146. But before the flames reach him, he is carried up to Mt. Olympus and enthroned among the gods, 146 and 147. The goddess Hebe is given to him for a wife, 147.

Hermēs. The Messenger of the gods. Takes Pandora to Epimetheus, 10. Is sent to tell Deucalion and Pyrrha that they may make any request they like, 14. Helps Ares to escape from captivity, 28. Kills the watchman Argus, and rescues Io, 31 and 32. Takes Dionysus to King Athamus, 63; and afterwards to be brought up by some nymphs, 64. Gives Perseus a sickle with which to cut off the head of Medusa, 97. Returns to the nymphs the three Precious Things they had lent to Perseus, 103. Steals part of the booty of Amphitryon for Zeus, 108. Helps to arm Heracles for his fight with the Minyae, 112. Brings the Golden Ram to carry away Phrixus and Helle, 149. Brings Psyche into the assembly of the gods, 243.

Hesionē. Daughter of Laomedon king of Troy. Is rescued by Heracles from the monster, 126. Is given to the hero Telamon after the conquest of Troy, and allowed to take her little brother Podarces or Priam with her, 140 and 141.

Hesperides. Three nymphs who tended the garden of golden apple-trees, 132. (See *Garden of Hesperides.*)

Hestia. Daughter of Cronus, 4.

Hippodamīa. Daughter of Oenomaus king of Elis. Her father compels all her suitors to compete with him in a chariot-race, 77. Pelops wins, and marries Hippodamia, 78 and 79.

Hippolyta. An Amazon carried off by Theseus to be his wife, 193 and 194. She is killed, fighting for him against her country-women, 195.

Hippolytus. Son of Theseus and Hippolyta, 194. Is beloved by Phaedra, wife of Theseus, 197. She causes his death, 198.

Hippomedon. One of the Seven Heroes who march against Thebes, 213.

Horn of Plenty. The horn of the goat Amalthea, converted by Zeus into a miraculous horn, 5. Is given to Heracles in exchange for the horn of Acheloüs, 143.

Hundred-armed. Monsters, children of Uranus and Gaea, 1. Are thrust into Tartarus, 2 and 3. Are released by Zeus and help him to fight against the old gods, 4.

Hydra. A monster killed by Heracles, 114 to 116. Heracles poisons his arrows with the Hydra's gall, 116; and uses them in shooting at the Centaurs, 118; and 144.

Hylas. The most beautiful boy in Greece. Is dragged down into a forest pool by the nymphs who live there, and never seen again, 155 and 156.

Hypsipyle. Queen of Lemnos. Saves the life of her father when all the other men in the island are killed, 153 and 154.

Is banished in consequence, and becomes nurse to the child of Lycurgus king of Nemea, 215 to 217.

Icarus. Son of Daedalus. Flies away from Crete with his father, but falls into the sea and is drowned, 52 and 53.

Idas. Carries off Marpessa in a winged chariot, 20. Is preferred by her to the god Apollo, 21 and 22.

Ino. Wife of Athamas, and stepmother of Phrixus and Helle, 63 and 148. Tries to get Phrixus put to death, 148 and 149. Is killed in trying to escape from her husband in his madness, 63 and 150.

Io. Daughter of a king of Argos. Is beloved by Zeus, and changed by him into a white cow to save her from Hera, 31. Hera gets possession of the cow and puts her under the charge of the watchman Argus, 31. She is rescued by Hermes, 31 and 32. Hera however continues to torment her till she is protected by the king of Egypt who marries her, 32 and 33.

Iobatēs. King of Lycia. Receives Bellerophon kindly, 47; but at the request of Proetus, sends him on dangerous missions in the hope of his being killed, 47 to 50; until, finding that he is under the protection of the gods, he begs him to settle in the country and gives him his daughter in marriage, 51.

Iolāus. A cousin of Heracles. Accompanies him on his expedition to destroy the Lernean Hydra, 115 and 116.

Iolcus. The city of King Pelias, 151. Jason sets out from Iolcus in quest of the Golden Fleece, 152 and 153. Returns with the Fleece, 171. Is obliged to leave the city, 173.

Iolē. Daughter of Eurytus king of Oechalia. Is sought in marriage by Heracles, but refused to him by her father, 137 and 138.

Iphiclēs. Son of Amphitryon and Alcmene, and half-brother of Heracles, 108 and 109.

Iphiclus. (1) The owner of a famous herd of cattle demanded by Neleus king of Pylos in return for the hand of his daughter Pero, 69. (2) Grandson of the above. Melampus instructs him how to propitiate the gods and obtain an heir, 71 and 72.

Iphitus. Son of Eurytus, king of Oechalia. Is killed by Heracles in a fit of anger, 138.

Isthmus. The neck of land which connects the peninsula of Peloponnesus with the rest of Greece. The Argonauts land there on their return from Colchis, 171.

Italy. Heracles passes through the country when driving home the cattle of Geryon to Mycenae, 130.

Jason. Nephew of Pelias, king of Iolcus, by whom he is sent to fetch the Golden Fleece, 152. Reaches Colchis, 159; and accomplishes the tasks demanded by Aeëtes, 160 to 164. Obtains possession of the Fleece by the help of Medea, and escapes with her, 165. Is purified by Circe from the blood of Absyrtus, 167. Arrives at Iolcus and shows Pelias the Golden Fleece, 171. Goes to Corinth, where King Creon offers him Glauce for his wife, 173. Presents her with a marriage-robe which, unknown to him, has been poisoned by Medea, 174.

Sees Medea drive away in her dragon-car, 175.

Jocasta. Wife of Laïus king of Thebes, and mother of Oedipus, 205. Marries Oedipus, not knowing who he is, 207 and 208. When it is discovered, she hangs herself in her despair and grief, 209.

LABYRINTH. A wonderful house made for Minos king of Crete by the artist Daedalus, 52 and 186. Theseus enters it and kills the Minotaur, 189 and 190.

Lāïus. King of Thebes and husband of Jocasta. Exposes his son Oedipus on Mt. Cithaeron, 205. Is killed by his son unknowingly, 206 and 207.

Land of Shades. See *Lower World.*

Laodamas. Son of Eteocles. Succeeds his father as king of Thebes, and is killed in fighting against the Epigoni, 225.

Laomedon. King of Troy, and father of Ganymede, Hesione and Priam. Tries to cheat the gods Apollo and Poseidon, and is punished by them, 126. Receives from Zeus two horses of the gods to console him for the loss of Ganymede, 127. Promises the horses to Heracles if he will deliver Hesione from the monster, but fails to keep his word, 126 and 127. Is punished by Heracles for his faithlessness, 140.

Lapithae. The subjects of Pirithoüs the friend of Theseus, 195. They conquer the Centaurs with the help of Theseus, 196.

Lēda. Wife of Tyndareus king of Sparta. Marries Zeus in the form of a swan, and becomes the mother of Pollux and Helena, as well as of Castor and Clytæmnestra, 200.

Lemnos. An island inhabited by women only. The Argonauts rest there on their way to Colchis, 153 and 154.

Lernē. The city near which was the abode of the Lernean Hydra destroyed by Heracles, 115.

Lēto. Marries Zeus, and becomes the mother of Apollo and Artemis, 23 and 24. Begs her children to punish Niobe, 80.

Libya. The country of Antaeus. Heracles wrestles with him, 133.

Lichas. A herald. Brings to Heracles the robe poisoned by Deianira which causes him such agony that he beats Lichas to death against the rocks, 145 and 146.

Lower World. Pluto is made king of the Lower World, 5. Persephone is carried off to it by Pluto, 16 to 18. The Danaïdes are condemned to never-ending punishment, 37 and 38. Tantalus is condemned to a similar punishment, 76. Alcestis is allowed to return from the Lower World, 94. Heracles goes there to fetch Cerberus, 135 to 137. Theseus and Pirithoüs descend with the intention of carrying off Persephone, 199 to 202. Castor and Pollux spend alternate days in Olympus and in the Lower World, 201. The helmet of Pluto is lent to Perseus, 97.

Lycia. The country of King Iobates. Bellerophon slays the Chimaera, and afterwards settles in the country, 47 to 51.

Lycomēdēs. King of part of the island of Scyros, 202. Kills Theseus by treachery, 203.

Lycurgus. King of Nemea. The

Nemean games are instituted in memory of his child by the heroes marching through his country on their way to Thebes, 215 to 217.

Lydia. The country of Queen Omphale, whom Heracles serves as a slave for three years, 139 and 140.

Lynceüs. Son of Aegyptus. Is saved from death by his wife Hypermnestra, 36. Succeeds Danaus as king of Argos, 37.

MARPESSA. Daughter of Evenus. Runs away with Idas, 20. Prefers him to the god Apollo, 21 and 22.

Medēa. Daughter of Aeëtes king of Colchis. Helps Jason to win the Golden Fleece, and escapes with him, 161 to 165. Kills her brother Absyrtus, 166. Is purged by Circe from the stain of blood, 167. Deceives Talos and makes him destroy himself, 169 and 170. Deludes the daughters of Pelias into killing their father, 172 and 173. Sends a poisoned robe to Glauce, 174. Flees away from Corinth in her dragon-car, 175. Is at the court of Aegeus at Athens when Theseus arrives, 183. Her plan for poisoning him fails, and she flees away in her winged car, 183 and 184.

Mediterranean. The sea which one of the Giants is in the act of crossing when buried by Athene under the island of Sicily, 6. Europa is carried across it by Zeus, 58.

Medūsa. One of the three Gorgons. Is killed by Perseus, 96 to 98. Her head turns his enemies to stone, 101.

Megara. Daughter of Creon, king of Thebes. Becomes the wife of Heracles, 112. Dies, 137.

Melampus. Learns the language of birds and insects, 68; and the art of knowing the future, 72. Obtains the cattle of Iphiclus for his brother Bias, 69 to 72. Restores the reason of the daughters of Proetus, 73 and 74.

Meleager. Son of Oeneus and Althaea, king and queen of Calydon. Takes part in the great boar-hunt which Atalanta also attends, and dies in consequence of a quarrel with his uncles, 83 to 88.

Milanion. Wins the race with Atalanta by the help of three golden apples which he drops at intervals, 89 and 90.

Minos. King of Crete. Father of Ariadne and Phaedra. Refuses to let Daedalus leave his country, 52. Is sent a bull for sacrifice by Poseidon, but fails to kill it, 122. Receives Heracles who delivers him from the mad bull, 122 and 123. Is furnished by Hephaestus with an iron watchman, 169. Demands from the Athenians a tribute of seven youths and seven maidens, 186. Hears that Theseus has slain the Minotaur and carried off his daughter Ariadne, 190 and 191. Gives his daughter Phaedra in marriage to Theseus, 197.

Minotaur. A monster, half man, half bull, who lived in the Labyrinth of Crete, 187. Is killed by Theseus, 189 and 190.

Minyae. The subjects of King Erginus. They are conquered by Heracles and obliged to pay tribute to the Thebans, 112.

Moors. Name given to the people of Africa, burnt black by Phaëthon, 41.

Muses. Nine beautiful goddesses

of poetry, art and science. They teach a riddle to the Sphinx, 207. They sing at the marriage of Eros and Psyche, 243.

Mycēnae. A city of Greece. Perseus exchanges his kingdom of Argos for the cities of Mycenae and Tiryns, 103. The right of his son Electryon to succeed is disputed by Pterelaus, 104. Amphitryon comes to Mycenae to sue for Alcmene, but is obliged to leave on account of the unintentional murder of Electryon, 105. Sthenelus drives away Alcmene and seizes the kingdom, 105. His son Eurystheus succeeds him as king, 109. Heracles goes to Mycenae and serves Eurystheus for twelve years, 113.

Mysia. A country of Asia Minor. The Argonauts land on their way to Colchis, and leave Heracles and Hylas behind when they sail away, 155 and 156.

NAXOS. An island, the favourite land of the god Dionysus, 66 and 67. He finds Ariadne on the island and marries her, 191 and 192.

Nēleūs. King of Pylos. Demands the cattle of Iphiclus in return for the hand of his daughter Pero, 69. Gives her in marriage to Bias, 72. Refuses to purge Heracles from the murder of Iphitus, 138. Heracles marches against him and kills him and all his family, 142.

Nemea. A city of Greece. Heracles goes there to kill the Nemean lion, 113. The Nemean Games are instituted in memory of the child of King Lycurgus, 215 to 217.

Nēreūs. A sea-god. Is compelled by Heracles to tell him how to obtain the golden apples from the Garden of the Hesperides, 132.

Nessus. A Centaur. Carries Deianira across the river and tries to run away with her, but is shot by Heracles with a poisoned arrow, 144.

Nestor. Son of Neleus king of Pylos. The only member of the family of Neleus left alive after the revenge of Heracles, 142.

Niobē. Daughter of Tantalus, and wife of Amphion king of Thebes. Boasts of her superiority to the goddess Leto, and is punished by having all her children taken from her at once, 80 to 83.

OCEANUS. The great stream that flows right round the world. The horses of Helios bathe in it every evening, 39. The Gorgons live on an island in Oceanus, 97. On an island in Oceanus lives the three-headed king Geryon, whose cattle Heracles is sent to fetch, 128. The golden apple-tree from which the Garden of the Hesperides grows, is planted by Hera in Oceanus, 131 and 132.

Oechalia. The capital of Eurytus king of Euboea. The city is destroyed by Heracles, 145.

Oedipus. Son of Laïus and Jocasta, king and queen of Thebes. Is exposed by his parents on Mt Cithaeron because of the prediction that he shall kill his father and marry his mother, 205. Is found by a herdsman and taken to Polybus king of Corinth who adopts him, 206. Kills his father not knowing who he is, 207. Goes to

Thebes where he delivers the country from the Sphinx, and is rewarded with the kingdom and the hand of Jocasta, 207 and 208. Puts out his eyes in despair, on discovering his parentage, 209. Is banished from Thebes, and finds a refuge at Athens, where he dies, 210 and 211.

Oeneŭs. King of Calydon, and father of Meleager and Deianira. Inaugurates the great Calydonian boar-hunt, 83 to 88. Receives Heracles, who comes to sue for Deianira, 142.

Oenomāus. King of Elis. Makes all the suitors of his daughter Hippodamia, vie with him in a chariot-race, and is killed in racing with Pelops, 77 to 79.

Oeta, Mt. Heracles ascends the mountain and builds his funeral pile upon it, 146.

Olympus, Mt. The abode of the gods, 2. The Giants try to climb up into it, 5 and 6. Demeter comes down from it to the earth, 16 and 17. Hera drives Leto from it, 23; but afterwards receives her back again, 24. Hera descends from it to give bad advice to Semele, 61. Zeus descends and shows himself to Semele in god-like splendour, 62. Dionysus and Semele are received among the gods, 67. Tantalus is allowed sometimes to ascend to Mt. Olympus, 75. Ganymede is brought to Mt. Olympus by the sacred eagle of Zeus, 127. Heracles is enthroned as a god, 147. Psyche is received among the Immortals, 243. Heracles drives the horses of Diomedes to the foot of Mt. Olympus, 124.

Omphalē. Queen of Lydia. Heracles sells himself to her as a slave for three years, 139 and 140.

One-eyed, The. Monstrous children of Uranus and Gaea, 1. Are thrust into Tartarus, 2 and 3. Are released by Zeus, and forge weapons for him, 4.

Oracle. A temple of Apollo at Delphi, where the god vouchsafed prophetic answers (also called Oracles) to those who came to enquire concerning the future. Answers are given to Cadmus, 56; Oenomaus, 77; Acrisius, 95; the parents of Andromeda, 99; Heracles, 113 and 139; the Trojans, 126; Pelias, 151; the Athenians, 203; Oedipus, 206; Adrastus, 213; Alcmaeon, 227; the parents of Psyche, 231.

Orpheŭs. Delivers the Argonauts from the Sirens by overpowering their song, 168.

Ossa, Mt. The Giants propose to set up this mountain on the top of Mt. Pelion, and so climb up to Olympus, 6.

Othrys, Mt. The mountain from which the old gods fight with the younger ones, 4.

Otus. Son of Poseidon and brother of Ephialtes, 27. He and his brother fight against the gods and make Ares prisoner, 28. They are killed through a device of Artemis, 28.

PALLANTIDAE. Sons of Pallas, the brother of Aegeus, 177. They lay a plot to kill their Uncle and Theseus, 184.

Pallas. Brother of Aegeus king of Athens, 177.

Pandōra. Is fashioned by Hephaestus out of clay, and endowed with gifts by all the gods, 10. Is sent to be the wife of Epimetheus, and takes with her,

as her dowry, a casket full of Diseases and Cares, 10 and 11.

Parnassus. A mountain sacred to the gods. Zeus proves it to be the centre of the earth, 14. The chest in which Deucalion and Pyrrha have been preserved during the Flood, strands there, 14. The sacred Oracle of Apollo is located in Delphi, a city on Mt. Parnassus, 55.

Parthenopaeus. One of the Seven Heroes who marched against Thebes, 213.

Pegasus. A beautiful winged horse. Bellerophon becomes his master, is taught by the goddess Athene how to control him, and by his help overcomes the Chimaera, 48 to 50.

Pelias. King of Iolcus, 151; and father of Alcestis, 92. Gives his daughter in marriage to Admetus, 92 and 93. Sends Jason to fetch the Golden Fleece, 152. Kills the father of Jason during his absence, 171. Is put to death by his own daughters, through the treachery of Medea, 172 and 173.

Pēlion, Mt. The Giants propose to climb up from this mountain to Olympus, 6.

Peloponnesus. A peninsula of Greece, named after Pelops, 79.

Pelops. Is killed by his father, and served up to the gods at a banquet, 75; but is brought to life again by Zeus, 76. Is dispossessed of his kingdom of Phrygia, 77. Travels to Elis, and through craft conquers Oenomaus in the chariot-race, 77 to 79. Marries Hippodamia, and becomes king of Elis, 79.

Perigunē. Daughter of the Firbender, one of the robbers slain by Theseus on his way to Athens, 180.

Pēro. Daughter of Neleus, king of Pylos, 69. Becomes the wife of Bias, 72.

Persephonē. Daughter of Demeter. Is carried off by Pluto to be queen of the Lower World, 16 to 18. Sends back Alcestis to live again for a time in the Upper World, 94. Receives Heracles when he visits the Lower World, 136. Gives Psyche the casket for which she has been sent by Aphrodite, 242.

Perseūs. Son of Zeus and Danaë, 95 and 96. Is sent by the king of the island where his mother has taken refuge, to fetch the head of Medusa, 96 to 98. Rescues Andromeda from the monster, and is married to her, 99 to 101. Returns with the head of Medusa, and rescues his mother from the king, who wants to marry her, 101. Kills his grandfather unintentionally, and succeeds to the kingdom of Argos, 102; but exchanges it for the cities of Mycenae and Tiryns, 103.

Phaedra. Daughter of Minos king of Crete. Is married to Theseus, 197. Loves Hippolytus and asks him to marry her, 197. Causes his death when he refuses, and then hangs herself in despair, 198.

Phaëthon. Son of Helios, 39. Obtains leave from his father to drive the chariot of the sun for a single day, 40. Falls from it, and is killed by a thunderbolt, 41.

Phēgeūs. Purges Alcmaeon from the stain of blood, and gives him his daughter in marriage, 227. Sends his sons to kill Alcmaeon on account of his faithlessness, 229.

Phenicia. The home of Europa and Cadmus, 54.

Phinĕus. (1) Brother of Cepheus. Disputes the right of Perseus to marry Andromeda, and is turned to stone, 100 and 101. (2) A seer whom the Argonauts deliver from the Harpies, 157 and 158.

Pholus. One of the Centaurs. Entertains Heracles in his cave, 117 and 118.

Phrixus. Son of King Athamas, and brother of Helle. His stepmother lays a plot to kill him, but he is rescued by a Golden Ram and carried away to Colchis, where he marries the daughter of King Aeëtes, 148 to 150.

Phrygia. The country of Tantalus, 75. His son Pelops is driven away from his kingdom, 77.

Phylacus. Inherits the cattle of his father Iphiclus, 69. Agrees to give them to Melampus if he will teach him how his son may propitiate the gods and obtain an heir, 70 to 72.

Phyleŭs. Son of Augeas king of Elis. Refuses to bear false witness against Heracles, and is banished by his father, 120 and 121. Heracles restores him, and makes him king, 142.

Pillars of Heracles. Two mountains of rock set up by Heracles in the sea between Europe and Africa, 128.

Pirithoüs. King of the Lapithae. Forms a friendship with Theseus, 195; who helps him to defeat the Centaurs, 196. Pirithoüs is compelled to sit for ever on an iron seat in the Lower World, 200 and 202.

Pluto. Son of Cronus, 4. Is made king of the Lower World, 5. Carries off Persephone, 16 to 18. Allows Sisyphus to return to the earth for a single day, 44. Allows Heracles to take Cerberus to the Upper World on condition that he captures him without weapons, 136.

Podarces. Son of Laomedon king of Troy. Is rescued by his sister Hesione when the town is sacked by Heracles, 140. Receives the name of Priam, 141.

Pollux. Son of Zeus and Leda, and brother of Castor, 200 and 201. Rescues his sister Helena, 201. Takes part in the expedition of the Argonauts, 157. Petitions Zeus that he and his brother Castor may be allowed to share the same fate, 201.

Polybus. King of Corinth, 205. Adopts Oedipus, 206.

Polynices. Son of Oedipus and Jocasta. Is banished from Thebes by his brother Eteocles, and takes refuge with Adrastus king of Argos, 212 and 213. Induces Adrastus to march an army against Thebes, 213. Accepts his brother's challenge to single combat, in which he gives and receives a mortal blow, 220.

Poseidon. Son of Cronus, 4. The sea is made subject to him, 4 and 5. Gives Idas a winged chariot in which to carry off Marpessa, 29. Becomes the father of Otus and Ephialtes, 27. Punishes Cassiopea for being vain of her beauty, 99. Gives Pterelaus a golden hair which preserves him from death, 107. Sends Minos a bull for sacrifice, and punishes him for keeping it back, 122. Punishes Laomedon for his faithlessness, 126. The Argo is dedicated to Poseidon, 171. Poseidon disputes with Athene

the guardianship of Athens, 176. At the request of Theseus, he creates the monster that destroys Hippolytus, 198.

Priam. See *Podarces.*

Proetus. King of Argos. Cleanses Bellerophon from the murder of his brother, 45; but thinking he has done him an injury, sends him to Iobates, whom he desires to kill him, 46. Sends to beg Melampus to restore his daughters to their right minds, 73 and 74.

Promētheŭs. Brings down fire to the earth against the will of Zeus, 9 and 10. Is chained, as a punishment, to Mt. Caucasus where an eagle preys upon his liver, 12. Is delivered by Heracles, 12. Warns his son Deucalion of the great Flood about to take place, 13.

Psÿchē. Is hated by Aphrodite on account of her beauty, 231. Is carried away by the Wind-god, and secretly married to Eros, 232 and 233. She disobeys his command that she shall never seek to see him, and he is obliged to leave her, 236. Psyche enters the service of Aphrodite, who requires her to accomplish hard tasks, 237 to 242. Zeus gifts Psyche with immortality, and sanctions her marriage with Eros, 243.

Pterelāus. Grandson of Perseus and king of the Teleboae. Disputes the right of Electryon to the cities of Mycenae and Tiryns, 104. Amphitryon leads an expedition against him, and conquers him through the treachery of his daughter, 106 and 107.

Pylos. The home of Melampus, 68; also of King Neleus and his daughter Pero, 69. Heracles conquers the city, 142.

Pyrrha. Wife of Deucalion, who is saved with him in a wooden chest at the time of the great Flood, 13 to 15.

Pythia. The Priestess of Apollo, through whom the prophetic answers vouchsafed by the god were transmitted, 55. Answers are given by her to Cadmus, 56; to Heracles, 113; to the Athenians, 203; to Oedipus, 206. An answer is refused to Heracles, 139.

RHEA. Wife of Cronus, 2. Saves her son Zeus from being devoured by his father, 3.

Rome. Heracles passes the spot where Rome was afterwards built, in bringing the cattle of Geryon to Mycenae, 130.

SALMŌNEŪS. King of Elis. Tries to imitate Zeus, and is destroyed by a thunderbolt, 42 and 43.

Sciron. One of the robbers killed by Theseus on his journey to Athens, 181.

Scyros. The island where Theseus proposed to spend the last days of his life, 202. He is treacherously killed there by Lycomedes, 203. The Athenians fetch his bones from the island, 203 and 204.

Selēnē. Goddess of the moon. Loves Endymion, 30.

Semelē. Daughter of Cadmus and Harmonia. Is secretly married to Zeus, 61. Prevails on him to come to her clothed in the glory of the gods, and dies at the sight, 61 and 62. Is gifted by Zeus with immortality, 67.

Shadow-leader. The conductor of dead souls to the Lower World. He takes Alcestis thither, 94.

Sicuy. The goddess Athene buries one of the Giants beneath the island, 6. Persephone is carried off from it by the god Pluto, 16. Daedalus flies to it from the island of Crete, 53.

Silēnus. Plays with Dionysus when a child, 64. Follows him in his journey through the world, 65 and 66; and helps to celebrate his marriage with Ariadne, 192.

Sirens. Treacherous sea-nymphs, who attract sailors by their magic singing and then tear them to pieces. The Argonauts escape them through listening to the song of Orpheus, 168.

Sisyphus. King of Corinth. Tries to cheat gods as well as men, and is tormented in the Lower World with an unending punishment, 43 and 44.

Sparta. The country of King Tyndareus, husband of Leda. Theseus and Pirithoüs go there and carry off Helena, 199.

Sparti. The warriors who sprang from the dragon's teeth sown by Cadmus, 58.

Sphinx. A monster with the head of a woman and the body of a lioness. She propounds a riddle and devours everyone who fails to answer it, 207 and 208. Oedipus guesses the riddle, and the Sphinx dies, 208.

Sthenelus. Brother of Electryon. Drives his niece Alcmene and her brother from Mycenae, and seizes the kingdom, 105. Becomes the father of Eurystheus, 109.

Storm-foot. One of the Harpies from whom the Argonauts deliver Phineus, 157 and 158.

Stretcher, The. One of the robbers killed by Theseus on his way to Athens, 181 and 182.

Stymphālus. A city in Arcadia. Heracles drives away the birds that infest the Stymphalian lake, 121 and 122.

Styx. A river of the Lower World, by which the gods swore an inviolable oath, 40; 62.

Swift-wing. One of the Harpies from whom Phineus is delivered by the Argonauts, 157 and 158.

Syria. Io travels to Syria to find her child, 33.

TAENARUS, MT. Psyche is directed to go there to find an entrance to the Lower World, 240.

Talōs. An iron watchman, made by Hephaestus for Minos king of Crete. Medea deludes him into killing himself, 169 and 170.

Tantalus. King of Phrygia, 65; and father of Niobe, 80. Kills his son Pelops and offers the flesh to the gods at a banquet, 75. Is condemned in the Lower World to an unending punishment, 76.

Tartarus. A dark pit below the earth into which the hundred-armed and one-eyed monsters are banished by Uranus, 2. They are released by Zeus, and the old gods whom he has defeated, take their place, 4. Typhöeus is thrust into Tartarus, 7.

Telamōn. Receives the beautiful Hesione as a reward for having been the first to scale the walls of Troy, 140.

Tēleboae. The subjects of King Pterelaus. They are sent on an embassy to Electryon, and a quarrel takes place, 104. Amphitryon marches against them at the desire of Alcmene, and conquers their land, 105 to 107.

Thebes. Built by the descendants of Cadmus, 59. A wall is built round it by means of the song

of Amphion, 59 and 60. Alcmene takes shelter there when driven by Sthenelus from Mycenae, 105. Amphitryon delivers the city from the destroying Fox, 106. Heracles is born in Thebes, 108 and 110. He delivers the land from the tribute imposed by the Minyae, 111 and 112; but leaves the city after his madness, 113. Laïus and Jocasta are king and queen of Thebes, and Oedipus is born there, 205. Oedipus delivers the land from the Sphinx, and becomes king, 207 and 208; but on the discovery of his parentage, he is banished, 209 and 210. His sons Eteocles and Polynices succeed him, but Polynices is banished by his brother, 212. Polynices goes to Argos, 212; and persuades Adrastus to lead an army against Thebes, 213. The Argives are defeated before Thebes, 218 to 220. Creon king of Thebes refuses burial to the Argives, and immures Antigone for disobeying his orders, 221 to 223. The Epigoni march against Thebes, 224 and 225. The Thebans decide to abandon the city, 225 and 226. The Epigoni and others re-people it, 226 and 227.

Thermōdon. A river in Asia, near which was the country of the Amazons, 125.

Thersander. Son of Polynices. Made king of Thebes by the Epigoni, on their taking possession of the city, 226.

Thēseŭs. Son of Aegeus king of Athens. Is brought up at Troezen by his mother Aethra, 177 and 178. Is sent by her to the court of his father at Athens, 179. On his way there, he kills many robbers,—the Club-carrier, 179; the Fir-bender, 179 and 130; Sciron, 181; the Stretcher,

181 and 182. Reaches Athens, 182; and is recognised by Aegeus, 183. Medea's attempt to poison him fails, 183. The Pallantidae are foiled in their plan to murder him, 184. Theseus captures the Bull of Marathon, 184 and 185. Goes to Crete as part of the tribute of seven youths and seven maidens, kills the Minotaur, and escapes with Ariadne, 187 to 190. Is compelled to leave Ariadne at Naxos, 191. Forgets to hoist the white sail, and thus causes the death of his father, 192 and 193. Carries off Hippolyta to be his wife, 193. Conquers the Amazons, 194 and 195. Makes a friendship with Pirithoüs, and helps him to defeat the Centaurs, 195 and 196. Erects an Altar of Pity in the market-place of Athens, 196. Marries Phaedra, 197. Prays for the death of Hippolytus, 198 Joins Pirithoüs in carrying off the beautiful Helena, 199; and descends with him to the Lower World to try and get possession of Persephone, 199. Finds himself unable to leave a stone on which he had sat down for a moment, 200; but after many years is released by Heracles, 201 and 202. On his return to Athens, finds himself forgotten, and retires to Scyros, 202. Is there killed treacherously by Lycomedes, 203. His bones are transferred to Athens, 203 and 204.

Thrace. The country of Diomedes, whose fierce horses Heracles goes to fetch, at the command of Eurystheus, 123.

Tiresias. A blind seer of Thebes. Explains the visit of Zeus to Alcmene, 108. Foretells the fate of Oedipus, 205; and 225.

advises the Thebans to abandon the city, 225. Goes with them, and dies during the flight, 226.

Tiryns. Perseus exchanges his kingdom of Argos for the cities of Mycenae and Tiryns, 103. The right of his son Electryon to succeed is disputed by Pterelaus, 104. Sthenelus takes possession of the kingdom, 105. He is succeeded by Eurystheus, 109.

Titans, Titanides. Children of Uranus and Gaea, 2. The father of Prometheus was a Titan, 9.

Trāchis. A city of Greece. Heracles leaves Calydon for Trachis, 144; and goes from Trachis to Euboea, 145.

Tripod. A three-legged stool on which the Priestess of Apollo sat when uttering her divine predictions, 55. Heracles carries off the sacred Tripod from Delphi, 139.

Triptolemus. Is taught by Demeter how to sow corn and cultivate the land, 19.

Troezēn. The home of Aethra, wife of King Aegeus, 177. Theseus is brought up by her at Troezen, 177 and 178. Helena is placed there under her care for a time, but is rescued by her brothers, 199 and 201.

Troy. The country of King Laomedon, father of Ganymede. Apollo and Poseidon build a wall round Troy, and punish Laomedon for withholding the reward he has promised, 126. Heracles lands at Troy, and rescues Hesione from the monster, 126 and 127. Returns to punish Laomedon for his faithlessness, and conquers the city, 140.

Tȳdeūs. Is driven from his country on account of an unintentional murder, and goes for refuge to Adrastus king of Argos, 212 and 213. Takes part in the expedition against Thebes, 213. Bears a message to Eteocles, and distinguishes himself by feats of strength, 218. Is killed before Thebes, with all the other heroes, 220.

Tyndarcūs. King of Sparta, 199; and husband of Leda, 200.

Typhōeūs. A monster created by Gaea to fight against the gods, 6. Is conquered by Zeus, and flung into Tartarus, 7.

URANUS. God of the sky, 1. Is killed by his son Cronus, 2.

WANDERING ROCKS. The Argonauts pass through them in safety by the help of Hera, 168 and 169.

Wind-god. Carries Psyche into the beautiful valley, 232. Brings her two sisters to see her, 234; and takes them home again, 235.

ZEŪS. Son of Cronus and Rhea. Is hidden in the island of Crete and nourished by the goat Amalthea, 3. Makes war against his father and thrusts him into Tartarus, 4. Marries Hera, 4. Conquers the Giants, 6; and Typhöeus, 7. Sends Pandora to bring Disease and Care into the world, 10 and 11. Punishes Prometheus for bringing down fire to the earth, 12. Destroys the world by a Flood, 13 and 14; and allows Deucalion and Pyrrha to re-people it, 14 and 15. Stops the fight about to take place between Apollo and Idas, 21. Marries Leto and becomes the father of Apollo and Artemis, 23. Becomes the father of Endymion whom he

ZEU

gifts with perpetual sleep, 29. Hurls a thunderbolt at Phaëthon to prevent him from destroying the earth, 41. Carries off Europa in the form of a bull, 54 and 58. Marries Semele, and at her wish goes to her surrounded with the glory of the gods, 62. Raises her from the Lower World to Olympus, 67. Conceals his son Dionysus from Hera, 63; and gifts him with divine power, 64 and 65. Imposes a punishment upon Apollo, 81. Marries Danaë in the form of a golden shower, and becomes the father of Perseus, 95 and 96. Marries Alcmene, and becomes the father

ZEU

of Heracles, 108 and 109. Decrees that the next child born of the race of Perseus shall rule over the cities of Mycenae and Tiryns, 109. Sends his sacred eagle to steal away Ganymede, 127. Interposes between Heracles and Apollo, 139. Punishes Hera for trying to destroy Heracles, 141. Marries Leda in the form of a swan, and becomes the father of Pollux and Helena, 200. Grants the wish of Pollux to share the fate of his brother Castor, 201. Causes the two sons of Alcmaeon to grow up to manhood in a single night, 229.

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